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# *Guidance in Foreign Languages*

"In a world in which this country must be ever more conscious of other nations, linguistic skills are as important as mathematical ability and scientific and artistic talent. The boys and girls who can learn a new language rapidly should be found young, and developed."

JAMES BRYANT CONANT,  
*Education in a Divided World*

## INTRODUCTION

THE purpose of this study is to provide a rational basis for answering some of the many questions which high-school pupils ask their teachers and guidance counselors about various phases of foreign-language learning. It is an attempt to improve the general program of educational guidance by raising a much-disputed subject as far as possible above the level of conflicting opinion. The question as to who should study a foreign language, for example, often becomes a pawn in the struggle between vested subject-interests, and the pupil is lost in the shuffle. Or else, personal factors may frequently tend to invalidate the guidance offered in this field, to the detriment of both school and pupil. These strictures are no less applicable to the foreign-language teacher who happens to be doing guidance work than they are to the teachers of other subjects.

What is needed is a return to the basic principle of guidance, namely, that the primary concern of the guidance counselor is not so much with subjects as with the pupil and his needs and problems. The functions of educational guidance are (a) to widen the pupil's awareness of educational alternatives; (b) to help him understand his own needs, abilities, and interests; and (c) to lead him to equate (a) and (b) through a process of self-guidance.<sup>1</sup> These functions of guidance must be carried out with pupils in regard to all curriculum and subject choices. Foreign-language guidance should be no exception to this rule, whatever the predilections of the guidance counselor may be.

There is a real need for more objective guidance in foreign languages in addition to the reasons suggested above. New curriculum trends, in response to the needs of a majority of pupils, are undoubtedly leading to the neglect of the gifted minority. This is reflected in reduced offerings of what are generally considered the "exacting" subjects, of which foreign language is one. It is also reflected in a narrow view of vocational guidance as some-

<sup>1</sup> For a complete discussion of the functions of guidance, see Traxler, A. E., *Techniques of Guidance*, N. Y., 1945, p. 3.

thing distinctly apart from educational guidance designed to meet broader needs. Until we have attained a "controlled" society (horrible word!) in which vocational training is allocated to pupils in exact proportion to vocational opportunities, the dangers of a too-early specialization will always be with us. The implications of this for elective or exploratory subjects such as foreign languages are too obvious to require further elaboration.

Like any other educational guidance, foreign-language guidance is needed to prevent pupil maladjustment and failure. Not only is it necessary to select those pupils who are capable of profiting by foreign-language study, but it is equally necessary to utilize the latest research data on foreign-language learning in order to deal most effectively with the questions and problems of these pupils. And finally, there is the need of advising pupils about college-entrance requirements and examinations, but this constitutes only a routine and relatively minor aspect of foreign-language guidance.

We may well begin with a few questions culled from the present adviser's experience. It is not too much to assume that the questions below represent a typical sampling wherever youngsters are confronted with the choice of a foreign language, or, having already made their choice, are experiencing difficulty. An analysis of these questions will help us delimit the problem.

1. What's the good of studying a foreign language?
2. Is there any point in taking a foreign language if I don't plan to go to college?
3. Do I have the ability to make good in foreign-language study?
4. Which language should I take?
5. What sort of things do they do in foreign-language classes?
6. Why are my marks lower in foreign language than in other subjects?
7. How can I improve my work in foreign language?
8. Will knowledge of a foreign language help me earn a living?
9. What does a foreign-language aptitude exam consist of?
10. What type of questions do they ask in the foreign-language part of the College Entrance Board exams?

There are, of course, dozens of other questions, depending on the particular type of school, the nature of its student body, and its foreign-language offerings. Some of these other questions represent problems that can be solved only by administrative action involving changes in teaching personnel, improvement in entrance procedures, in sectioning, and in instruction and supervision. Where such questions disclose problems that affect a sufficiently large number of pupils, they might even indicate the necessity for far-reaching curriculum adjustments.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, it would not

<sup>2</sup> Kaulfers suggests "orientation courses in language arts, courses in world literature in translation, and survey courses in foreign cultures" in order to meet the needs of those pupils incapable of coping with the traditional foreign-language curriculum. Kaulfers, W. V., "Magic-Wand Solutions to Foreign-Language Problems," *School Review* (Dec., 1936), Vol. XLIV,



do to tell a pupil that he is having difficulty with a subject because his teacher is an old fogey who is soured on life, or because he or she is not adapting the method of instruction to the interests or maturity of the class. Neither would it solve any immediate problems to inform the pupil that he is the victim of an antiquated syllabus. The alert guidance counselor will, of course, bring these matters to the attention of his principal, but as a rule, they go far beyond the scope of the immediate adviser-pupil relationship. Questions, therefore, which depend upon administrative action or curricular change are necessarily excluded from this inquiry.

Certain questions can be answered merely by referring the pupil to a college catalogue or some comprehensive work on colleges and universities such as that published by the American Council on Education.<sup>3</sup> Many high schools include in their handbooks lists of some of the colleges which their students are likely to attend, together with entrance requirements. Other schools distribute mimeographed material of the same nature, generally prepared and kept up to date by the college counselor.

Questions dealing with C.E.E.B. examinations can also be answered in short order by permitting the student to consult the latest *Bulletin of Information*, obtainable by writing to the College Entrance Examination Board, Princeton, New Jersey. The *Bulletin* contains statements regarding the scope of the examinations, suggested preparation, and specimen questions in the various subject fields.

An analysis of the remaining questions discloses that they fall into a few basic categories, of which the two most important have to do with (a) the values of foreign-language study; and (b) the requirements for successful achievement in that subject. The present inquiry, therefore, will concern itself mainly with these two questions. This does not mean that the other questions will be slighted, but that answers to them will occur at various points in the broader discussion. The reason for this is that many of the questions overlap, and that, in completely answering the basic questions, answers to the others must necessarily be given.

#### *What's the good of studying a foreign language?*

Few advisers from subject fields other than foreign languages are capable of answering this question objectively. Even if the adviser happens to be a foreign-language teacher, he is apt to be suffering from that all-too-common myopia of most subject teachers, seeing only the special values of his own

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No. 10, pp. 744-752. For detailed suggestions regarding new-type foreign-language offerings, see Kaulfers-Kefauver-Roberts, *Foreign Languages and Cultures in American Education*, N. Y., 1942.

<sup>3</sup> Brumbaugh, A. J., Editor, *American Universities and Colleges*, Washington, D. C., 5th edition, 1948. Caution: Some popular works in this field do not list unit entrance requirements for each college.

subject without relation to the whole program of studies or to the needs and abilities of the individual pupil. What the pupil is likely to get in the way of advice is that he does or does not need a foreign language to meet the entrance requirements for this or the other college, the implication being that meeting college-entrance requirements is the sole good of studying a foreign language.

The less harried, or more conscientious, adviser may offer the student some of the traditional justifications for the study of a foreign language, usually time-worn clichés to the effect that foreign-language study is "cultural," that it enlarges one's knowledge of English grammar, that it helps one think more clearly, etc. Although these may or may not be a few of the concomitant results of studying a foreign language, depending on whether or not there is a conscious striving for them, such justifications are too nebulous to carry much weight with the average student. He has been accustomed to hear that math will help him keep his accounts and figure out batting averages; that physics and shopwork will be useful to him in home repairs; that his English will come in handy for writing letters of application for a job, etc. Practically all the motivation supplied to him by his teachers for the study of their subjects has hitherto been restricted to the necessarily limited and utilitarian outlook of the average adolescent. Can we blame him if he asks himself what immediate, material benefits he can derive from the study of a foreign language?

When it comes to the wider applications or long-term values of his other subjects, the average youngster is left quite cold by the information that the study of mathematics and science will provide him with the tools of rigorous thinking and will help him understand and cope with the complexities of our atomic age; that even his shopwork can give him an insight into the problems of our system of technological production; that the study of English will broaden and enrich his experience, helping him understand human motivation and deepening his sensitivity to beauty. Yet the good derived from the study of foreign languages lies, for the greater part, in this region of wider applications and long-term values.

A sincere answer to the question of the value of foreign-language study requires nothing less than a statement of the present-day philosophy underlying the teaching of foreign languages in the high schools. Appeals to academic tradition, to the alleged "cultural values" of a subject, or to its prestige in other countries are scarcely relevant in justifying the study of that subject to our pupils. It is necessary to consider the general aims of secondary education in the United States in response to our national ideals and the needs of our future citizens.

The Report of the Educational Policies Commission of the National Education Association<sup>4</sup> outlines four major purposes of education. They

<sup>4</sup> *The Purposes of Education in American Democracy*, Washington, D. C., 1940.

are: 1. Self-Realization; 2. Human Relationships; 3. Economic Efficiency; and 4. Civic Responsibility. A sound statement of the values of foreign-language study must necessarily equate these four purposes of secondary education with the purposes of foreign-language study. How this can be done is indicated in the outline below.<sup>5</sup>

*The Educational Values of Foreign Languages*

- I. Education for Self-Realization
  - A. Reading in many fields of interest
  - B. Aid in efficient writing of English
  - C. Appreciation and enjoyment of art, music, literature
  - D. Development of personality through contact with a foreign civilization
  - E. Profitable use of leisure time
  - F. Knowledge of foreign affairs and geography
- II. Education for Human Relationships
  - A. Understanding of and sympathy for foreign-nationality groups in the United States
  - B. Closer sympathy and understanding with regard to the older generation, where the pupil is a first-generation American
  - C. Acquaintance with foreigners, resulting in a richer social life
  - D. Understanding of human motivation and foreign *mores*
- III. Education for Economic Efficiency
  - A. Linguistic preparation for future vocations
    - 1. Vocations requiring mastery of the foreign language
      - a. Export-Import firms
      - b. Foreign sales representatives
      - c. Travel agencies
      - d. Banks (foreign exchange and foreign branches)
      - e. International news services
      - f. Radio script writers and announcers (foreign broadcasts)
      - g. Diplomatic and consular services
      - h. Interpreters (civil courts, U. S. Armed Forces, etc.)
      - i. Professional translators
      - j. Foreign-language teaching
    - 2. Vocations in which foreign language is an aid
      - a. Medicine
      - b. Pharmacy
      - c. Library Science
      - d. English and Social Studies teachers
      - e. Journalism and writing
      - f. The Ministry (missionary work)
      - g. The Arts (music, drama, art, and architecture)
      - h. Advanced research in many fields

<sup>5</sup> Adapted from *The Subject Fields in General Education*, De Boer, J. J., Editor (A Report of the National Commission on Cooperative Curriculum Planning), N. Y., 1941, pp. 97-99.

## IV. Education for Civic Responsibility

- A. Knowledge of foreign affairs and international relations
- B. Comparison of political, economic, and social systems
- C. Greater appreciation of American democracy
- D. Contribution to world citizenship

The problem of the adviser is to impart some inkling of these values to the student. Not all of these contributions to the aims of secondary education are applicable in the same measure to each foreign language taught in the high schools; nor do they all correspond to the needs, abilities, and interests of all students. Pertinent factors to consider would be (a) the student's future plans; (b) the national origin of his parents, particularly if a foreign language is spoken at home; (c) the foreign-speech areas in the student's environment; and (d) the contiguity of countries where a foreign language is spoken.

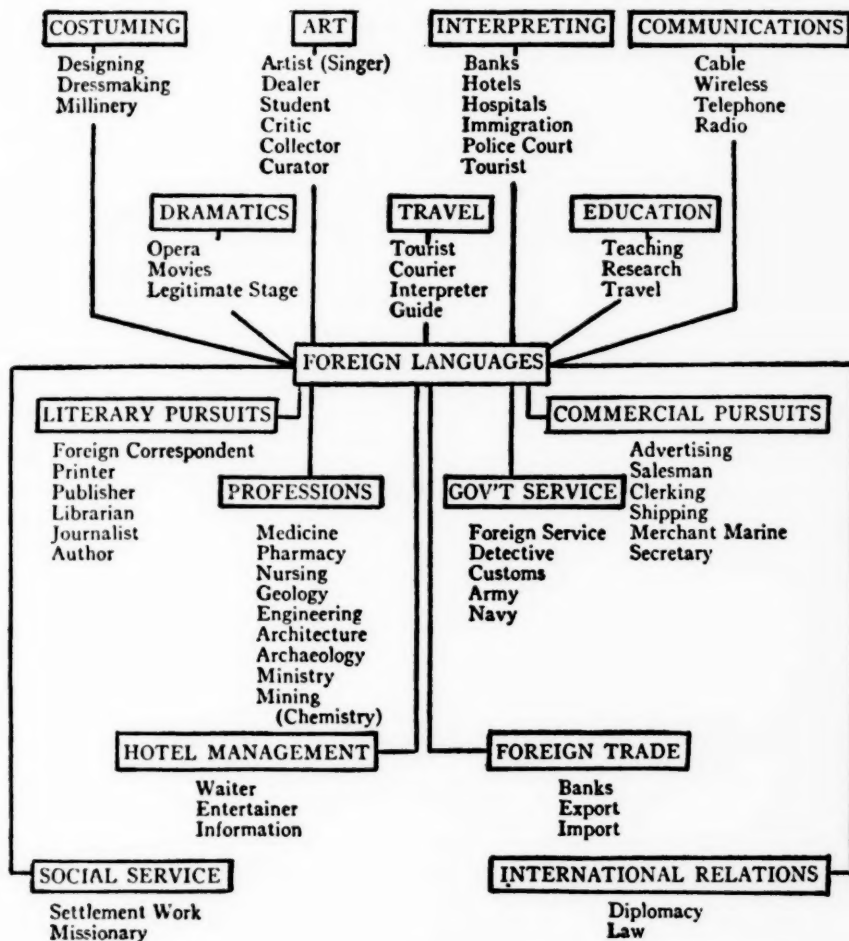
In schools where guidance charts are employed, it would be advisable to present the above outline in graphic form. It can be adapted to the particular situation of any school where foreign languages are offered. A specimen chart of this type was devised by the faculty of the Champaign Senior High School of Champaign, Illinois, and is reproduced below.<sup>6</sup> However, a glance at this chart will show that it was apparently prepared as part of a *vocational* guidance program. If the chart is used as a model for *educational* guidance, the educational values of foreign-language study should be given central prominence, and the vocational values subordinated.

It is not sufficient for the adviser to weigh all these factors by himself and finally impose a decision upon the pupil. This would violate the principle of self-guidance. The best procedure would be to have the pupil go over the above list of possible foreign-language contributions to his education and make out his own list of those items that would apply to his particular case, *i.e.* his future plans, his needs, and his interests. This individual list could then form a sound basis for the adviser's answer to the pupil, not only regarding the general values of studying a foreign language, but particularly the extent to which these values apply to the pupil himself. If the pupil's needs and interests do not correspond to any significant items in the outline listed above, it is questionable whether the study of a foreign language would yield values to him that could not be provided more economically by other subjects.

*Do I have the ability to make good in foreign-language study?*

This question comes up when the student is faced with the choice of a college preparatory curriculum having a foreign-language constant or some

<sup>6</sup> Reprinted in *Vocational Opportunities for Foreign Language Students*, Huebener, T., *The Modern Language Journal* Supplementary Series No. 1 (Third Revised Edition), St. Louis, Mo., 1949.



The Champaign Guidance Charts  
Faculty of the Champaign Senior High School, Champaign, Ill.

other curriculum permitting a foreign-language elective. It is not asked as frequently as it should be because many parents insist on having their children prepare for college despite every indication to the contrary. However, since an increasing number of colleges now admit students on the strength of a high-school diploma or entrance examination, without specifying any required units in foreign language, advising the student against taking a foreign language need not prevent him from going to college. This is particularly true of colleges of applied science, agriculture, engineering, technology, business administration, and teacher-training institutions for the vocational fields. It is also true to a more limited degree of some colleges

of liberal arts, notably in certain state universities which have had to adapt their entrance requirements to the graduates of high schools offering the new "life-centered" curricula.

Although the relaxing of the foreign-language requirement for college entrance represents a distinct trend, it may not apply to the particular college that a student is interested in entering. Many universities require from two to four years of liberal arts or pre-professional education as a condition of entrance to a professional school. This would involve meeting the entrance requirements for the liberal arts college even for the vocational fields indicated above. In all cases, therefore, where a student has a particular college in mind, it is the duty of the adviser to refer the student to the catalogue of that college for a specific statement of entrance requirements. Where the student may enter a college with a "condition" in foreign language, correspondence with the Director of Admissions may be necessary especially if the catalogue is not clear on the subject. However, the adviser should explain to the student what entrance on a condition involves.

If the question as to foreign-language aptitude is not asked by the student because his parents have committed him to a college preparatory course requiring a foreign language, it may still be the duty of the adviser to educe this question from the student, especially where a low I.Q. coupled with serious retardation in English reading might indicate almost certain failure to come.

A number of students may already have had an opportunity to explore their aptitude in a foreign language in junior high school. The adviser should certainly use any indications from this source. Even if the high school does not offer the same language that the student had begun in junior high, achievement in one foreign language may be taken as a general index of achievement in another.<sup>7</sup> Account should be taken, however, of the difference in type of instruction and standards of marking, as well as the difference in the maturity of the pupil, as between junior and senior high school.

In some junior and senior high schools a course in "General Language," "Basic Language," or a "Language Arts Survey" is sometimes used as an indication of probable success in studying a foreign language.<sup>8</sup> If such is the case, the adviser should certainly be guided by the pupil's achievement in such courses, however slight their predictive value may be.

The above-mentioned opportunities for prediction are exceptional. In most high schools the student is confronted with the problem of foreign-language aptitude for the first time. One of the predictive means available

<sup>7</sup> See Cole-Tharp, *Modern Foreign Languages and Their Teaching*, Revised edition, N. Y., 1937, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> See Blancké, W. W., "General Language as a Prognosis of Success in Foreign Language Study," *German Quarterly* (March, 1939), Vol. XII, pp. 71-80.



to the adviser is the foreign-language prognosis test. This type of test generally consists of several subtests involving verbal memory, word building, English grammar, phrase construction and translation based on given rules (in either a real or artificial language), ability to rearrange words according to rules of foreign word order, recognition of similarities in sound, accent, etc. Whether or not to employ such tests is dependent upon many factors, the most important of which is the existence of a general program of prognosis testing for the whole school. To single out foreign languages from all other subjects for prognosis testing would be a distortive procedure; first, because those electing a foreign language are almost always in the minority; and second, because the greater incidence of failure in business subjects, comprehensive technical subjects, sciences, and mathematics<sup>9</sup> would indicate a greater necessity for prognosis testing, or other means of pupil selection, for curricula requiring these subjects. However, assuming that there is a comprehensive program of aptitude testing in all subjects, the testing of aptitude in foreign languages would fit into the general picture as one of the many areas of prognosis.

In selecting a prognosis test, the adviser should keep in mind the following criteria: 1. Grade Level. (Is it suitable for ninth-grade pupils who have never studied a foreign language?) 2. Suitability for individual or group administration. 3. Validity. (Does it involve the type of skills and operations required in the foreign-language courses offered in your school?) 4. Correlation. (Has the correlation between performance in this test and subsequent achievement been determined on the basis of a large and wide enough sampling of students?)

There are, of course, other criteria applicable to all standard tests,<sup>10</sup> but the ones mentioned above are particularly important in view of the small number of available foreign-language aptitude tests and their admitted limitations.

The following are brief descriptions of the more important tests of this type:

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGNOSIS TEST.** Grades 8-9; 1930; 2 forms; 44 (60-65) minutes; Symonds, P. M.; N. Y., Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University; Correlation .71; "... designed to forecast achievement in foreign-language classes taught by the formal grammar-translation method; ... On the basis of a tryout of the test with prospective pupils of Spanish, the author advises that pupils scoring under 50 on Form B and under 25 on Form A should have considerable difficulty in learning a foreign language."

**LURIA-ORLEANS MODERN LANGUAGE PROGNOSIS TEST.** Grades 7-13;

<sup>9</sup> See *Statistics of Regents Examinations in the Registered Secondary Schools* (January and June, 1948), State Education Department, Albany, N. Y.

<sup>10</sup> See Smith, F. P., "A Check List for Standardized Objective Language Tests," *Modern Language Journal* (May, 1941), Vol. XXV, No. 8, pp. 616-627.



1928-30; 1 form; 76 (85) minutes; Luria, M. A. and Orleans, J. S.; Yonkers, N. Y., World Book Company; Correlation .75; "... too difficult below the ninth grade; ... Foreign language prognosis tests of the Symonds and Luria-Orleans type are usually excellent means for reducing foreign-language enrollments in nonfunctional courses taught by teachers incapable of adjusting either method or content to the needs, interests, and abilities of children."<sup>11</sup>

ORLEANS-SOLOMON LATIN PROGNOSIS TEST. Grades 9-16; 1926; Form A; 50-55 minutes; Yonkers, N. Y., World Book Company. "Coefficient of correlation of .70 or higher can usually be secured between the scores on this test and success in beginning Latin courses."<sup>12</sup>

In evaluating the results of a prognosis test, it is important to keep in mind the fact that such tests are imperfect instruments, more valuable in group prediction than in individual cases. The prognosis should be used as only one of the four possible indices to success in foreign-language study. The total evaluation of the pupil's ability to succeed should include the following:

1. *I.Q.* (Below 90 is a probable indication of inability to succeed in the type of foreign-language course usually offered in most high schools.)
2. *English Reading Ability.* (Retardation of more than two grades below the national norm, as measured by a standard test, would indicate the need for remedial reading in English rather than study of a foreign language.)
3. *General Scholarship Level.* (Barely passing, or failing, in English, Social Studies, and Math is a danger sign.)
4. *Foreign-Language Prognosis Test.* (The student should come within the percentile group for which fair probability of success is indicated.)

Neither the prognosis test results<sup>13</sup> nor the I.Q.<sup>14</sup> should ever be used as the sole determining reason for advising a student against taking a foreign language. It is well known that some special interest or powerful motivation can operate to overshadow the predictive value of any of the above-mentioned indices. The adviser must keep in mind the whole picture of the

<sup>11</sup> Reviewed by Kaulfers, W. V., in *The 1940 Mental Measurements Yearbook*, Edited by Buros, O. K., N. J., 1941, p. 158.

<sup>12</sup> Described more fully in *The Third Mental Measurements Yearbook*, Edited by Buros, O. K., N. J., 1949.

<sup>13</sup> "... it has not yet been established by research that the results of tests designed to measure aptitude in specific subjects or fields have significantly greater relationship to success in those areas than do the results of tests of general academic aptitude." Traxler, A. E., *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>14</sup> "... the correlation between intelligence test scores and success in the modern foreign languages ... lies somewhere between .20 and .60, falling more often between .30 and .40. While this indicates a positive relationship and that an intelligence test score would be a useful member in a team of tests to predict accomplishment, it demonstrates that the intelligence test score cannot be used alone successfully." Henmon, V. A. C. *et al.*, *Prognosis Tests in the Modern Foreign Languages* (Vol. XIV of The Modern Language Study), N. Y., 1929, p. 12.

student in relation to his curriculum choice and the particular foreign language he wishes to study.

*Why are my foreign-language marks lower than most of my others although I work harder in that subject?*

Note the two assertions the student makes in his question: 1. relatively lower marks; 2. harder work. Since students frequently have mistaken notions about their studies, it is advisable to begin by checking the accuracy of these two assertions.

The adviser should examine the student's record and compare his marks in other subjects with those in his foreign language. This will check the first assertion. To check the second, the adviser should obtain a statement from the student's foreign-language teacher as to effort in class and home-work record. Prepared with this information, the adviser can then call the student in and have him work out his home-study schedule in all subjects, including the time he spends in extra-curricular activities related to his various subjects. This latter item is significant because attendance at a current events or math club, for example, would indicate more total time devoted to social studies or mathematics.

If the student's question has been due to a misapprehension as to the facts in the case, the above procedure should lead him to formulate his own diagnosis of the poor or inadequate results in his foreign-language work. The possible answers that will occur to him will be (a) that his foreign-language marks are not really lower than his other marks; or (b) that he is not really working harder in that subject. The remedial procedures, if not already obvious to him, should be driven home by having him work out a revised schedule with a due amount of time devoted to his foreign-language preparation.

Problems due to inaccurate notions which students have regarding their effort and achievement can thus be easily settled. The real problem arises when the assertions implied in the student's question are really so. This requires a different and more subtle procedure.

Psychologists tell us that it is very questionable if there is such a thing as "linguistic incapacity" in individuals above the moron level.<sup>15</sup> If a student is not doing as well in one subject as in another, the causes are probably less interest, less application, and less preparation. Hence, the adviser will not help the student solve his problem if he shows too much sympathy for the latter's contention that he "just can't get the stuff."

H. R. Douglass attributes failures in foreign languages to several causes, including some of those mentioned above. Some of these can only be rem-

<sup>15</sup> See Todd, J. W., "The Psychological Fundamentals of Linguistic Achievement," in *Achievement Tests in the Modern Foreign Languages*, Henmon, V. A. C. et al. (Vol. IV of the Modern Language Study), N. Y., 1930, pp. 129-134.

edied by curricular and instructional changes beyond the scope of student guidance. However, I quote the two causes that are applicable to the present case.<sup>16</sup>

"These subjects are decidedly verbal and abstract and require a higher degree of verbal intelligence."

"In industrial and household arts every pupil can achieve something worth while. *There is very little necessary logical sequence.*" (Italics mine.)

To these statements by an educationist add the following by an honest foreign-language specialist: "It is beyond comprehension why so few people realize that the acquisition of a foreign language cannot be easier than the acquisition of one's own native tongue! It is infinitely harder; for to learn a new language means to acquire a new set of speech habits, different word-thought associations, new and profound mental adjustments *in the face of the powerful opposition of those already acquired.* Witness the frequently painful speech of foreigners, educated foreigners, who have been living here for decades!"<sup>17</sup>

There is no necessity for citing psychological studies in order to determine the various elements that go to make foreign languages an exacting subject. Common sense and a modicum of experience in studying a foreign language are sufficient to yield the following points of difficulty:

1. Foreign language is a skill subject
2. It is sequential and cumulative
3. It has an inexorable definiteness of subject matter
4. It involves a good deal of sheer memorization
5. It requires a capacity for sustained effort

In view of the above evidence, it would be a mistake for advisers to minimize the inherent difficulties of learning a foreign language. The fact that this is often done by some teachers to promote their subject is no service to their students and, in the long run, even proves a boomerang to the teachers themselves. Clear information on this point from the very beginning will do much to prevent recriminations such as those expressed in the question under discussion.

The present adviser has found the following approach useful in clarifying the matter to high-school students.

1. Foreign language is a skill subject, like piano playing. What will happen if you don't practice?
2. Foreign language is a cumulative subject. Each item learned and each assignment is like a foundation block in the erection of a building. What will

<sup>16</sup> Douglass, H. R., *Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools*, Revised edition, Boston, 1945, pp. 347-348.

<sup>17</sup> Pargment, M. S., "On Learning a Foreign Language," *Modern Language Journal* (March, 1945), Vol. XXIX, No. 3, pp. 198-209.

happen to the building if some of the foundation blocks are missing?

3. Mere readiness of mind or the ability to improvise (fake?) may get you by sometimes in certain other subjects. Can you give me an example from some other subject where you received a good mark even though you hadn't prepared especially? What will happen in your foreign-language class if, for example, you failed to learn the list of verbs assigned as homework?

Through such questions, the adviser can impart the facts about the difficulties of foreign-language learning in terms that the student can understand. Few students that take foreign language in the first place will lack the requisite intelligence to grasp what is presented to them in the above manner and to draw the resulting inferences. Properly presented, such clarification can fill the student with a sense of pride at belonging to the select group that is qualified to take a foreign language and, if he has the proper fibre, it may even serve as a challenge. In any event, by frankly revealing the special requirements for successful work in foreign languages, the adviser has helped the student understand the reasons for his relatively lower attainment in that subject and has prevented him from ascribing it to extrinsic factors that turn out to be little more than rationalizations of laziness or desultory effort. The next step would be to give the student some definite study hints to enable him to improve his work in foreign language.

*How can I improve my foreign-language work?*

This question ties in with the previous one when the cause for unsatisfactory achievement is insufficient application and home study. The guidance procedure would then be the same. However, most students who ask this question need specific guidance in study techniques. The subject teacher, as a rule, can only provide incidental group guidance during the teaching period, and is often not available for individual consultation after school. For this and for other reasons, the group adviser should be prepared to offer guidance in foreign-language study techniques.

For efficient guidance, a diagnosis of the student's particular weaknesses is necessary. Few students will have difficulty in every single phase of language study. The adviser should know that, although language learning is an organic process, it is generally carried on in distinct phases: pronunciation, dictation and spelling, vocabulary and idiom study, verb study, grammar analysis with application exercises, reading (silent and oral), composition (written translation), and oral work (usually reading followed by questions and answers in the foreign language). The troublesome phases will be found to vary with the particular student and the particular language being studied. In Latin and German, for example, the difficulty may be inflections and word order; in French, pronunciation, dictation and spelling; in Spanish, semantic distinctions such as that between *ser* and *estar*.

To be sure, there are standard diagnostic tests for some of the foreign languages, but they are impractical for many reasons. In the first place, few group advisers are foreign-language specialists; and in the second place, too much time is required for administering, scoring, and interpreting these tests. They are more suitable for department, rather than individual, diagnosis. A practical diagnosis can easily be obtained from the student's teacher and from the student himself. The diagnosis should indicate in which of the phases of his language work the student is deficient, and the study techniques for these phases should be emphasized.

One ready source of information as to study hints might be the student's textbook, both in the introduction and at various points along the way. If the textbook does contain such hints, the adviser can refer the student to this obvious source of self-guidance.

If there is an after-school help class in the particular foreign language, the adviser should have the student note its time, day, and room number. The adviser should urge the student to attend regularly. Much may be accomplished in an efficiently-run help class under the guidance of a teacher and with the aid of student tutors. In some help classes foreign-born students are employed for pronunciation and oral reading improvement as well as for administering dictation and aural comprehension exercises. The individual attention thus given to the student, often by a tutor in the same subject grade, is of inestimable value.

In some guidance offices, mimeographed copies of a form on "How to Study" are available for distribution to students.<sup>18</sup> These aids are of limited value unless the student has a parent who is intelligent and interested enough to go over the suggested aids to study with the child and help him put them into practice. In any case, such suggestions are of a general nature since they are applicable to all subjects. The adviser should go over the list of suggested techniques with the student and have him check those which might be particularly applicable to foreign-language study.

The following is a list of study techniques for foreign-language work, abstracted from a number of articles on the subject.<sup>19</sup> For such a list to be fully effective, the student must go over it in the presence of the adviser in order that all doubtful points may be cleared up. Ideally, the student should follow the suggested techniques under supervision.

<sup>18</sup> Those wishing to work out a "How-To-Study" sheet for guidance purposes should consult Laycock-Russell, "An Analysis of Thirty-Eight How-To-Study Manuals," *School Review* (May, 1941), Vol. XLIX, pp. 370-379.

<sup>19</sup> See "Supervised Study," in Cole-Tharp, *op. cit.*, pp. 509-515; Staubach, C. N., *How to Study Languages*, Boston, 1937; *How to Study Modern Languages in High School*, University of Chicago Press, n.d.; Jones, W. K., *How to Study Spanish*, Dallas, 1935; Cleshner, A., "Homework in French," *High Points*, (January, 1931).

## HOW TO STUDY FOREIGN LANGUAGES

1. As far as possible work aloud.
2. Repeat oral work in writing.
3. Use "key forms" to remember rules and exceptions.
4. Make a note of things you don't understand, and be prepared to ask questions about them in class.
5. Write out all vocabulary, idiom, and verb lists with the English meaning after each word or phrase. Cover up the English meanings with a slip of paper and try to recall these meanings. Then cover up the foreign words and try to recall them, looking only at the list of English meanings. Make a special review list of those items with which you have difficulty.
6. In reading, try to get the meaning of new words (a) from their general resemblance to English (cognates); or (b) from the context (the "intelligent guess"). This will save you the tedious job of looking up too many words.
7. Keep a list of the words you have to look up. Before each word, record the page and line number where it occurs. This will save you the trouble of searching through long lists if you need to refer to the word later on.
8. Always review the text and your word list before you come to class. In your notebook, encircle the page and line number of any word or phrase that you have looked up without being able to get the meaning of a sentence in which that word or phrase occurs. In class, ask questions about your encircled items.

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## Spanish Word Counts: Theory and Practice<sup>1</sup>

TWO theoretical principles of pedagogy have been derived from the observation that an extremely small number of lexical units makes up a huge majority of the running words in any sizable sample of either written or spoken language. These assumptions are, first, that the beginning student of language should be taught vocabulary in the sequence established by a frequency count of the language to be learned and, second, that when he has learned an undetermined number of meanings and functions for the lexical units comprising approximately 75 per cent of the average sample he has a "reading knowledge" of the language (or the basis for oral proficiency) and may be expected to handle unexpurgated texts with only reasonable difficulties.

There is no debating the logic in the assumption that a beginning Spanish student should learn *el*, *de*, *por*, and *para*, for example, before *dormilón*, *filología* or *varejonazo*. It is not the purpose of this paper to argue this point but, rather, to discuss two major problems which have been neglected in the development of our current pedagogical theories: the dependability of frequency lists and what actually does happen to the student who is learning Spanish.

It has already been theoretically demonstrated in the study *Natural Frequency and Word Counts*<sup>2</sup> that it is impossible to obtain a definitive count of the lexical units (morphemes) of a language. The practical, classroom teacher must, consequently, build his texts and oral programs upon counts of large samples which only represent the language in theory. The paramount question, then, is whether the frequencies predicted by these empiric counts will be reliable to a practical degree in specific language situations, that is, when the average of the count is applied to any one of the non-average units out of which counts are made. It is to be anticipated, naturally, that some discrepancy will inevitably appear between "average" and "specific," but it must be kept in mind that the current philosophy in language teaching is based on the assumption that this discrepancy is pedagogically insignificant.

The most effective validation of the general prediction reliability of word counts would come, presumably, if approximately the same results

<sup>1</sup> The research on this paper and the work by Mr. Pankow and Miss Jacobs, to be mentioned later, was done at Washington University, St. Louis.

<sup>2</sup> William E. Bull, *The Classical Journal*, May, 1949, pp. 469-484.



were consistently obtained from an analysis of a series of separate sets of material. Data gathered in the course of research on purely linguistic problems indicates that such a probability is highly unlikely. A search for examples of 69 problem reflexive verbs carried on for two years by a total of 25 of the author's advanced students showed that 12, of those appearing in Buchanan's list,<sup>3</sup> had a frequency noticeably below the number Buchanan encountered.<sup>4</sup> Thus:

<i>Verb</i>	<i>Number found</i>	<i>Buchanan found</i>
arriesgar	5	13
avergonzar	9	30
adormecer	7	13
aventurar	4	19
enderezar	6	23
engullir	5	9
hincar	8	15
horrorizar	5	7
maravillar	3	11
pasmar	3	9
precipitar	10	34
serenar	5	8

More examples, theoretically, should have appeared since more material had been sampled.

A similar discrepancy appeared in connection with a study on the position of Spanish adjectives. The project required about 500 examples of each adjective and four, *bonito*, *hermoso*, *nuevo*, and *pequeño*, were selected for special analysis because all were found in Keniston's Group I<sup>5</sup> and because the same four had not been counted by Buchanan as they "were assumed to be found in all categories."<sup>6</sup> Mr. Fred Pankow, my research assistant, read three books of poetry, one drama, two novels, and three volumes of literary criticism (about 1500 pages) and encountered only 1 example of *bonito*, 6 of *hermoso*, and 23 of *pequeño*. Only *nuevo* appeared with something like the predicted frequency. A maximum frequency of once every 69 pages (for *pequeño*) hardly placed any of these three among the most common words for this material.

Two checks were made on these statistics before giving up the project.

<sup>3</sup> Milton A. Buchanan, *A Graded Spanish Word Book*, Toronto, 1927.

<sup>4</sup> No exact count of the number of pages search was kept. Over 250 sources were sampled and enough material covered to provide nearly 2000 examples of the *ser* passive which Martín Alonso (*Ciencia del lenguaje y arte del estilo*, Madrid, 1947, p. 89) states "prácticamente no existe." The number of running words read may, consequently, be conservatively estimated to be much larger than the amount Buchanan counted.

<sup>5</sup> Hayward Keniston, *A Standard List of Spanish Words and Idioms*, New York, 1941.

<sup>6</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 9, Footnote 8.

Mr. Pankow made a "trial run" on four more works, with the following results.

	<i>pages</i>	<i>bonito</i>	<i>pequeño</i>	<i>hermoso</i>
<i>Revista de Educación</i> (Dominican Republic)	103	0	2	4
<i>El Sendero Andante</i> (Pérez de Ayala)	200	1	4	5
<i>El lugar del hombre</i> (Ramón Sender)	210	0	1	2
<i>Cuentos peruanos</i> (A. Arnao)	110	0	4	5
Total	623	1	11	16

The second check was more elaborate. Miss Suzanne Jacobs had just completed a thesis on the position of conjunctive adjectives in Spanish for which she had collected 5,157 adjectives.<sup>7</sup> Her cards showed 1 example of *bonito*, 10 of *hermoso*, and 23 of *pequeño*. 633 different adjectives appeared more frequently than *bonito*, 66 more often than *hermoso*.

To be certain that these figures were not accidental, the largest group of adjectives having the same range and frequency number (5-5) in the Jacobs' material was correlated with Buchanan's ratings. The results showed a similar disparity in the frequency of appearance. Thus:

rico	57.3	material	30.3
frío	51.3	personal	25.8
oscuro	50.1	directo	25.3
grave	49.0	primitivo	24.5
fácil	48.9	católico	21.9
inmediato	47.2	práctico	18.7
extranjero	37.1	popular	17.5
diferente	36.3	histórico	15.6
firme	35.6	filosófico	11.7
serio	34.6	objetivo	10.1
brillante	32.2	rígido	8.6
íntimo	32.1	sur	8.3
próximo	31.2	colombiano	4.1

Contrary to what might be expected, an even greater spread over Buchanan's ratings appears with adjectives having a higher range and frequency (9-9) in Miss Jacobs' material.

bajo	82.2
principal	59.3

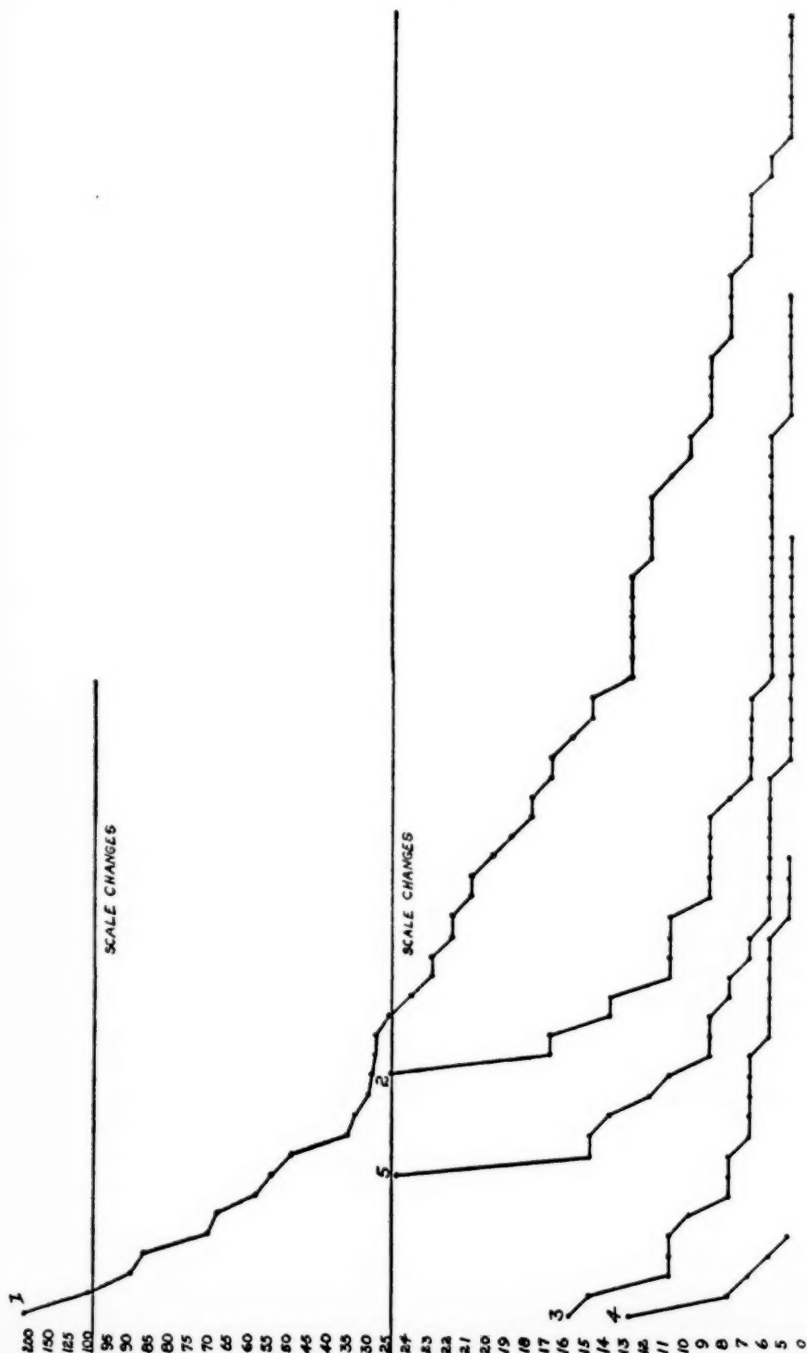
<sup>7</sup> Miss Jacobs took 1250 samples of 50 words each from over 300 authors. All the material is post 1920.

noble	51.2
superior	44.9
perfecto	42.0
vivo	37.0
mexicano	12.1
cerrado	8.1

The deviations discovered by this comparison prompted another check, this time with Keniston's list and by comparing all adjectives which appeared five times or more in the Jacobs' study. Five groups were established: the four categories found in Keniston and a fifth composed of those words too rare to be included in Keniston's count but which had a frequency of five or more. These words have been plotted in Graph I, page 22. It is to be observed that the majority of all five groups has about the same relative frequency and that the words excluded by Keniston as too uncommon form a curve essentially identical to that of his Group II, the "Essential Words." With but a few exceptions, the "rare" adjectives and the "common" adjectives have approximately the same relative frequency in a wide variety of contemporary Spanish sources.

That one word count will not predict the results of another large sampling of the language may be directly attributed to the fact that the great majority of the words of a language must appear in only a small number of sources or live linguistic situations. The internal mechanism of Buchanan's count, for example, practically guarantees that it will not correlate, except by sheer chance, with any other count. Only 10 words, of those on which he gives statistics, appear in all 40 of his sources. There are only 434 words out of 6702 which are found in 30 or more. In contrast, 848 appear in only 5 sources, 662 in 6, 519 in 7, and 425 in 8. 80 per cent of all the words in his list appear in 20 or less of the 40 sources. An even higher per cent of all the lexical units (18,331) Buchanan found in the 1,200,000 running words he counted must fall in the same range bracket. It is obvious that if the majority of words in a count appear in only half or less of the sources that a correlation of two counts will almost inevitably show a tremendous variation in rating. Any significant shift in subject matter will make "rare" words "common" and "common" words "rare." This explains why the "rare" adjectives in Graph I form a curve of almost the same shape as Keniston's "essential" adjectives. If 80 per cent of the common vocabulary is not essential to 50 per cent of the material, one-half of a count cannot even be correlated with the other half, to say nothing of being like an entirely separate count.

What does all this mean when a student is introduced into the picture? Actually, high frequency and range have very little meaning in a vocabulary-learning situation until they are converted into spacing, that is, the probability of encountering the word a given number of times per lesson,



GRAPH I

1. Adjectives in Keniston's Group I: Fundamental and Structural Words
2. Adjectives in Keniston's Group II: Essential Words
3. Adjectives in Keniston's Group III: Indispensable Words
4. Adjectives in Keniston's Group IV: Useful Words

66  
40  
24  
5

per semester, or per year. A word which is statistically common in a word count may just as well be as rare as plutonium if the student is going to encounter it only twice a year.

From the point of view of spacing, Buchanan's data provide some information which puts serious restrictions on the current word-count pedagogy. If it is arbitrarily assumed that the average printed page contains 400 running words, the 1,200,000 words counted make up 3000 pages. If it is further assumed, for mere theoretical purposes, that all the words are evenly distributed throughout this material, a word would have to appear 600 times to be spaced once every five pages. A check of those words potentially capable of appearing at least once every 50 pages or less shows the following results and something of what the student has to contend with in learning Spanish.

Page spacing	Occurrences required	Number found
5	600	200
10	300	80
20	150	314
30	100	328
40	75	306
50	60	279
Total		1707

If the student is in a translation course reading 6 pages per lesson, there are only 1707 words which he can possibly meet more often than once every 9 lessons, about 4 times a semester. There are, however, 4995 more words (75 per cent) in Buchanan's list which he will not meet anywhere near as often. Some he will meet only once every 600 pages, which may well mean, once a year or not at all. Even these figures are extremely optimistic, first, because the word is not likely to be evenly spaced, and second, since 80 per cent of Buchanan's words appear in twenty or less of the 40 sources it is theoretically possible for the student to read 1500 pages of material and meet only 20 per cent of the most common Spanish words. The average college student may well reach the point where he is considered to have a reading knowledge of Spanish without having encountered anything approaching a majority of the common words. If there is added to this the fact that he certainly will not have met all the common meanings of even those common words he has encountered, it may be concluded that his preparation is considerably below present expectations.

The other aspect of the student's problem arises when he has theoretically acquired a basic vocabulary composed of the commonest words. This is normally assumed to have been accomplished by the end of the first college year. At this point in the student's learning program the real prob-

lem is never what percentage of the running vocabulary of his text he already knows but the hard and inescapable fact of how many words he does not know at all. This is a point which has been entirely overlooked in the word-count philosophy. What determines success or failure now is how many words the student has to learn for every lesson and whether he is able to acquire and retain the new words at the rate he encounters them.

There is, of course, no theoretical answer to the question just posed. The student is now in action in a real learning situation with his texts and assignments before him. What happens to him in the second year? To get an answer the texts used in the first semester of 1948-49 at Washington University were analyzed.<sup>8</sup>

The first and most obvious discovery was that Michael West's dictum that not more than one new word should be introduced in every fifty running words is completely incapable of achievement in anything which has not been synthetically composed or especially prepared with that ideal in mind. In *Pensativa* (145 pages of text) there are 568 words which do not appear at all in Buchanan's list. This means that if the students at Washington, on entering the second year course, already knew the 6702 words in Buchanan they would still have to look up an average of 4 words per page in order to get an accurate translation of *Pensativa*. In *Nuestra Natacha* (80 pages of text) there are 421 words not found in Buchanan, an average of 5 per page. In one semester, then, the students were required to learn 989 really "rare" words!

Naturally, it is not to be assumed that the students have a vocabulary after one year of anything like 6702 words. It would be rash to assume that even all of them know all of the 2000 words listed by Keniston. However, taking this last assumption as an ideal, an analysis of *Nuestra Natacha* showed 1119 words not listed by Keniston. Now, discounting those common words and identical cognates eliminated from the vocabulary of *Nuestra Natacha* by the editor, there remains 2085 words, that is, an average of 26 words per page. The student, then, who is lucky enough to know all the words in Keniston's list knows only 50 per cent of the vocabulary which must be learned, an average of 13.9 words per page. That means that in a two-hour study period covering six pages he looks up 84 words, about one every other minute. By no stretch of the imagination can this be called either rapid or facile reading. The percentage of the running words that the student knows is meaningless in terms of the work he must do to prepare his lesson. In addition, his basic vocabulary has only taken care of 50 per cent of his learning problem.

The real question, then, is what significant aid the student gets from having learned the basic vocabulary established by the word counts when

<sup>8</sup> Goytortúa's *Pensativa*, edited by D. D. Walsh, New York, 1947 and Casona's *Nuestra Natacha*, edited by W. H. Shoemaker, New York, 1947.

he must go beyond simplified or synthetic texts. In other words, how economically has his time been used? 259 (51 per cent) of Keniston's "Indispensable Words" (1000-1500) do not appear in the vocabulary of *Pensativa*. A check of all four of Keniston's groups against *Nuestra Natacha* indicates that reliability of prediction (and revenue on previous effort) decreases in approximately the same degree as the typical frequency curve itself. Thus:

Group I	412	82 per cent in <i>Nuestra Natacha</i>
Group II	347	69 per cent in <i>Nuestra Natacha</i>
Group III	237	47 per cent in <i>Nuestra Natacha</i>
Group IV	183	37 per cent in <i>Nuestra Natacha</i>

The decrease in reliability shown above stresses the fact that bigger and better word counts are not the answer to the student's problem. More sources and more words simply increase the heterogeneity of the elements compounding a frequency curve and automatically decrease the probability of the curve representing any specific source or real language situation. Simultaneously, the proportional difference between the truly common words and the rare ones increases and the rating of the middle-range words (those semantically most useful) becomes less and less significant.

It may be startling, though certainly proper, to assert that the student learning a language by the word-count system is actually working under extremely adverse conditions. This is certainly true if he spends his first year doing a "stream-lined" grammar based entirely on the first 600 or 800 commonest words and if, simultaneously, his reading is confined to synthetic texts limited to the first 1500 or 2000 words. Such a regime inevitably produces a situation which contradicts every principle of standard pedagogy. First, it is a situation requiring a most uneconomical expenditure of time and energy. The reason is obvious. If the word counts have any validity at all, they exhibit it in the rating of the first few hundred words. This demonstrates that the student will encounter them in almost any text with a frequency that guarantees that he will learn them out of sheer excessive repetition. With synthetic texts the student, consequently, is elaborately over-taught what is certain to be easiest for him to learn and systematically under-taught what is demonstrably most difficult for him. Furthermore, when he meets unexpurgated texts he finds that his basic vocabulary meets only half of his vocabulary needs and discovers that the system no longer provides him with any systematic device for coping with a huge number of new words. When he most needs help, he gets none at all. It seems to be assumed that the student can somehow learn new words at this stage by meeting them once or twice a month while during the first year he must encounter them dozens of times per week. The statistical fact is that all his new vocabulary will now appear less often than once every fifty pages yet it



is exactly at this point in his learning of the language that he no longer gets any organized help. It would seem, then, that under the word-count system now in current use the student is carefully taught everything that is easy and left to learn by himself everything that is hard.

This does not mean that word counts should be summarily cast into some pedagogical purgatory. Their real pedagogical value lies precisely where they are statistically most valid, that is, in isolating extremely rare words on one end of the range and a very few hundred (perhaps 500) very common words on the other end. The rare words can be disregarded. The extremely high frequency words should be systematically under-taught, as far as grammar and class time is concerned, and the time saved by this process may be more economically devoted to those useful words which actually carry the significant content of most of our communications. If a large number of these words are artificially and properly spaced throughout the student's elementary program his learning of the hard words can be properly supervised and he will not be plunged into the unexpurgated language with a false sense of security and achievement and with practically no training in learning a vocabulary which, as has been demonstrated, "will not learn itself for him."

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## *What is Foreign Language Study For?\**

ANSWERING my own question, I should say that foreign language study is for

1. Education, not just training;
2. Enrichment, not just utility;
3. Culture, not just activity.

Training is good, utility is necessary, and activity is an integral part of life. All three, however, represent the lowest level of educational processes. Let us teachers of language, who can help our students soar to the heights, not be content to gabble on the ground, not be satisfied with anything less than the best of which we are capable. The intensive oral approach to foreign language, sometimes (falsely) called the "Army method," is not our best.

Incidentally, there is no such thing as an "intensive method," since a method is a way of doing things, whereas "intensity" applies only to effort. We cannot assume that by calling any kind of procedure an intensive one, we shall automatically induce the learner to put into it the intensity which is the sole guarantee of its success. This is wishful thinking, or the cart before the horse.

Man being a rational animal, he never does anything without a reason for it, even if the reason is really an irrational one. Usually, however, he has a reason which is at least valid for himself.

When the United States Army, early in World War II, began to set up foreign language courses for its officers and men, it knew pretty well what it wanted, and it enlisted some of the best brains in the foreign language army to insure the getting of it. Two things were outstanding in the minds of the planners:

1. Time was very short, and the idea was to do in a day what it usually takes a week or more to accomplish.
2. The basic assumption to start with was that in *all* the war theatres an oral mastery of the native language would be indispensable. In some cases, indeed, this was all that was needed or even desirable. In Japan and China, moreover, the written forms of the language, besides being enormously difficult, bear no relation to its sounds: one could conceivably master these forms completely without being able to say a word in either language. Also, in any number of cases, there were neither teachers nor textbooks to

\* Substance of a paper read at the Fourth Annual Foreign Language Conference of the Northwestern State College at Natchitoches, La., April 2, 1949.

be had, and the number of native speakers of the language in question often proved to be extremely limited.

This combination of circumstances, together with a quantitative demand for foreign language performers that is unmatched, not even approached, in the history of this country, led to an experiment in mass production which will rightly go down in our history as one of the signal achievements of the second World War.

Now, it must be borne in mind that while the term "army method" is really a misnomer, since it was the language teachers who, at the request of the army, set up the necessary machinery and made it work, the manifest success of the undertaking was not entirely, not even largely, due to purely educational factors. The components of achievement in this case were mostly quite particular and necessarily ephemeral. I think it important to name them, though it has been done before, because these facts are in some degree overlooked in most of the plaidoyers for the intensive oral method.

1. The cost of the language program—exorbitant by peace-time standards—was of no moment, since the Army (i.e. the tax-payer) was footing the bill.

2. The motivation of the language-learner—directly related to war-aims on the one hand, to personal ambition on the other—was exceptional if not unique.

3. The student participants were screened in advance; they were on the whole of superior mentality, segregated by sexes, and organized in classes of uncommonly small size.

4. Army discipline applied not only to classroom attendance, but also to home work and to home living. Distractions were at a minimum.

5. The unprecedented allotment of weekly hours to foreign language study, a daring innovation in itself, could be and was justified only by the emergency character of the national situation.

6. Flunking, always a serious problem in school administration, was taken care of by the simple device of "separating" the failing student from the language class. What happens to the flunk under a peace-time regime of the oral method has to my knowledge never been adequately discussed.

None of the six factors just enumerated can be duplicated in a peace-time setup, for which reason alone I am personally sceptical of the sweeping claims often made for the oral intensive method just after the war, to the effect that this is the white hope for language learners, and that we ought to adopt it everywhere in our schools.

However, my challenge of the intensive oral course is not based primarily, hardly at all, upon its success or failure in doing what it sets out to do. From my point of view, indeed, "success" in this type of program in our schools would be at least as regrettable as its failure. For what I am challenging is the very *theory* of the intensive oral method, which I regard as

undesirable for the American school and as inimical to the best interests of modern foreign language study, including the best interests of those who conduct such study.

In order to make myself clear on this point, I shall return to the question I have chosen as a title. To answer this question properly, I must examine, however briefly and summarily, the entire position of foreign language study in American education.

Our foreign language policy, following a tradition of nearly two thousand years' standing, is founded on two major premises: first, that the study of a foreign language is intended to provide access to the more or less phonetically recorded products of the foreign people's thought, and second, that such documents have lasting intellectual and spiritual values. To these two premises of principle we may add one of pure policy, which is however also based on realities, not just abstract notions. It is this, that the American school will and must continue to look across the Atlantic rather than across the Pacific. Once and for all, the roots of our culture lie in western Europe, and the Germanic and Romanic languages should be foremost among our fields of linguistic interest.

All the occidental languages developed alphabetic writing, with momentous results for our civilization. For the language teacher this means that with slight additional effort the learner can master the forms of writing along with the oral symbols of speech and their meaning; it is common experience that the ability to read not only does not interfere with the oral use of western tongues but even strengthens its security and increases its effective range.

I wonder if we can have any adequate conception of the labor and cost of producing by means of sheepskin and quill pen even the few MSS which have been preserved for us: that it was enormous can be ascertained by anyone with an inquiring mind. Why did men undergo this vast effort and incur this great expense, laboriously making only one transcript at a time? Was it not because they realized the transitoriness of all spoken speech and felt the importance of preserving for other eyes and future days the outstanding achievements of minds then living? But what was that importance, if it did not involve the only possible utilization of the written records: namely, that eyes should read them and brains take in the substance of their message for future use? To ignore the value, almost the existence, of the written treasures of the past in the educational practice of today, or any day, would seem to be an unjustified renunciation of a great inheritance, a denial to the learner of one of the most precious values of his civilization.

For what I am discussing here is not the byways of American education, but the main roads of a liberal arts curriculum; the question is not what some individual learner may prefer, but what is sound practice for the great body of our students. In other words, shall we urge, or even compel, all our college

youth to concentrate their attention solely or even largely upon the oral mastery of *any* modern foreign language which they are proposing to study?

There are two tacit assumptions, in most of the articles favoring the oral intensive method, which in fact go counter to all practical teaching experience. One is that *all* learners make a success of the oral method. The other is that we have an unlimited supply of teachers capable of employing the oral method. That this second assumption—I need not even discuss the first one!—is very far from the truth is sufficiently indicated by the fact that the old Direct Method of 30-odd years ago was largely done to death by the inability of teachers to handle it. For it is not enough for the teacher to have memorized the dialogs in the textbook: he must be prepared for all sorts of variations made either by inadvertence or by intent on the part of the learner, some of which may originate in the learner's own home, bringing with them an authority that is all the more dangerous for being sentimental rather than scientific. If the teacher cannot authoritatively declare one variant correct and another one false, he will soon lose the confidence of his class and will very likely lose his job as well. In a word, the teacher of the oral method must be virtually bi-lingual; and how many of our American teachers can claim to be that?

But let me assume for the sake of theoretical discussion that we have nothing but bi-lingual teachers, and no students who rate below C. What I wish to drive home is the point that even the maximum of success of the exclusively oral method is not what we ought to want, and that it represents an ideal in education which must not satisfy us, any of us, if we have any sense.

The advantages of achieving oral fluency in a foreign language seem to me to be mainly two. One I may call training for skill. Undoubtedly, the mind of a learner profits from every successful acquisition of a skill: some sort of co-ordination is required, and in acquiring and perfecting it the mind achieves a certain measure of flexibility, power, and self-confidence.\* The second advantage is similar to that of any applied skill: it enables its possessor to use it. Thus, the language adept gains the ability to converse with natives of the foreign land or speakers of the foreign tongue on their own ground, the ability to understand them and to make them understand, the ability to listen to radio broadcasts, public addresses, and sermons in the foreign tongue, and the like. While it is not quite true that the ability to speak confers *automatically* the ability to understand, it may be conceded that practice in speaking is one of the best ways of getting to understand what is spoken.

The results of oral mastery just set forth are well enough and unobjec-

\* I have long been a believer in what I have been wont to call "the trained mind," and students of education theory will recall that after the educationists had long denied the existence of any "transfer of training," they rediscovered both its existence and its importance.

tionable in themselves as objectives of language study, but my contention is that they are, ideally speaking, inadequate, and that the time devoted to securing them can be spent much more fruitfully. Observe first of all that these benefits are subject to serious practical limitations. Oral fluency, like any other skill, can only be maintained by fairly constant practice, and is rapidly impaired by the lack of it. Unless the foreign language is kept in use rather consistently after the school course is done, the learner will soon see his time-investment dwindling toward zero; and it cannot be recovered without someone to help. How many conversation-partners will he find in our American environment, apart from a few large or specialized communities? But what happens to a speaking knowledge when it is not kept up is demonstrated to us daily by thousands of so-called hyphenates who have migrated to this country from other lands: all of those who do not have a reading knowledge to support their speaking rapidly become illiterate in what was originally their mother tongue, and what remains the only language in which they feel at home.

One of the chief reasons for the loss of speaking ability, of course, is that oral approach to any language, native or foreign, tends to elevate mere practice over precept, and to present examples in place of rules. The grammatically untutored person can rarely tell you why he employs a certain speech pattern in preference to a seemingly analogous one. Similarly, the teaching manuals used with the oral methods of language instruction generally supply only just as much grammatical instruction, only just as much grammatical theory, as has been found to be absolutely indispensable. But most young Americans begin foreign language study after the age of pure imitation is over. It is not only natural for them to ask why certain things are so; in many cases it is a prerequisite to learning that they receive sound answers to such questions. And it is a commonplace of foreign language teaching that pupils often declare the beginning of an understanding of their own language to have lain in the foreign language classroom.

As just indicated, not only the recovery of an oral skill but also its maintenance depends on persons other than the speaker; one cannot even listen unless somebody is speaking, and you cannot do much talking all by yourself. But a printed book, magazine, or newspaper is at your command when and as you want it. Access to one printed book means, in principle, access to thousands of printed books. The reader of books need never lack for materials on which to practice his skill and make it serve his needs.

But my argument goes further and deeper. Oral speech is in general restricted in vocabulary and syntax, and tends to be loose in structure, stereotyped in phraseology, and shallow in content. In books, on the other hand, we have the greatest thoughts of some of the greatest minds of all time, in the most cogent and compelling form their originators could command. Oral mastery can at best procure us contacts with living men, under



strictly limited conditions; reading mastery brings us, on our own terms, the spiritual treasures of all the ages of articulate man.

I interrupt my own flow of oratory at this point to anticipate an objection which the oral enthusiasts may be expected to make. They may and often do say that the oral trainee can be brought to a reading mastery *after* he has achieved oral fluency. To this contention, which is partly correct, I respond with two counter-statements. First, it is good sense, in education as elsewhere, to take the straight road to your objective if there is one, and a man who is going to Florida from Louisiana, let us say, will not deliberately route himself by way of Mexico. And it can be shown that for a number of reasons oral practice is not a good preparation for reading in any language; while reading is or can be a very good preparation for speaking. Second, and more important, the whole technique and spirit of oral work leads away from reading, not toward it, and the *ideals* of these two modes of foreign language activation are not only divergent but almost antithetical. By and large it can be said that there is little or no *cultural* benefit to be derived from such use of the foreign language as the oral method of instruction stresses; but cultural benefits are the main objective and the real *raison d'être* of reading.

Must we not ask ourselves, in connection with a question of this kind, what education is for, indeed, what education *is*? I am far from proposing to banish from our educational system all the mental and even manual skills on which so much of our civilized life depends. But surely we must all recognize that a skill is nothing all by itself, nothing without an idea to give it purpose and reference. It follows, then, that if we are forced to make a choice between idea and skill, between the ability to utter phrases and the ability to grapple with ideas, the American college may not hesitate. It must choose the way of the idea.

I asked just now what education is for. Let me again revert to my title and ask what foreign language study is for. Is it enough for us to train young men and women to order a meal, buy a ticket, or engage a room in a foreign tongue, or in several of them? Any porter in an international hotel can do as much, and it seems to me a rather ignoble goal for a student of the liberal arts. Must we not expect the foreign language, though in a lesser degree, to function in the same way as our own? Is any language not the gateway to a literature which holds the key to the soul of a people? But the great literature of any people, the literature in which a nation's permanent contributions to the advancement of the world are recorded, is a *past* literature, and this means that it is rarely accessible to the ear, only to the eye of the student. Shall a foreigner learn English merely in order to converse with a stevedore in New York, a banker in San Francisco, or even Professor Learned of Siwash College? Shall he not receive such training as will bring the treasures of English literature within his grasp: Byron and Browning, Goldsmith and Gray, Shelley and Shakespeare?



"The tumult and the shouting dies,  
The captains and the kings depart;  
Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,  
A humble and a contrite heart."

What the captains and the kings wanted in war-time is not the kind of thing you and I should aspire to in peace-time.

We are told that the world's best literature can be had in translation—which in this country is only too far from the truth\*—and that in any case all you need is to get a general idea of what it is all about. Is there anyone here who does not realize what it means in time and effort to acquire an esthetic appreciation of a great work of poetic art, in any language, not excluding one's own? Do you think that any number of repetitions of "Wo ist der Bahnhof? Er ist links um die Ecke," will help the student even to understand, to say nothing of appreciating, such a passage as the following?

"Was du, in mir, dir selbst getan, wird dir  
Bei mir, dem, der ich ewig bin, nicht schaden."  
(Kleist, *Amphitryon*, 2321/2)

And yet, is not the apprehension and the enjoyment of beauty, as conveyed by the masterworks of literature, one of the most lasting and precious benefits we can confer upon our students? Shall we give them a stone when they should have bread—and could have cake?

I see in the preference for oral fluency over reading ability a phenomenon related to the present vogue in high schools of Current Events as a substitute for the study of History. Many leaders of opinion in this country reveal a growing impatience with the voice of the past, whether expressed in poetry, in political theory, or in philosophic wisdom. In my high school days we studied the essays of Burke and Macaulay, and we memorized some of the significant passages. That was more than 50 years ago, and I still have in my ears the swing of Macaulay's style: "Clive seems to us to have been constitutionally the very opposite of a knave, bold even to temerity, sincere even to indiscretion, hearty in friendship, open in enmity." Today the high school pupil is taking "social studies" and being "adjusted to his environment." We read Milton and Shakespeare, and outstanding works of American poets; today pupils are being helped to understand the profundities of the *Reader's Digest*.

As a humanist and an educator, I must deplore the tendency to discuss the present as if it had no necessary connection with a past. Similarly, I must uphold in my own field the kind of training which leads the student away from the trivialities of current speech and thought, back to the fountain

\* In this Goethe-year 1949 you cannot buy even the masterworks of the poet in English; to say nothing of scores of lesser writers. The actual availability of foreign literature in English translation is a sorry chapter in the book of our intellectual life.

heads of wisdom, back to the lasting records of the foundation of our civilization. True education, as I view it, provides the mind with master keys, as it were, which unlock the great storehouses of knowledge and wisdom.

Oral mastery of a foreign language supplies a different sort of key, one which opens a gate that leads us to a flowing river. We may play in the water at certain times, we may enjoy its rippling and gurgling, and we may even learn to swim in its currents, but it flows eternally away from us, and it leaves little or nothing behind.

The reading knowledge of a language, on the other hand, admits us to something resembling a great intellectual laboratory, equipped with all the devices for the development and improvement of the human mind that all the ages of man have ever known. This workroom is never closed by night or day, and it may be re-entered as often as we like and for as long as we like. The student who spends an extended period of purposeful activity in this laboratory emerges with a mind enriched, broadened, and deepened, better fitted to attain to that view of life as a whole which the study of the humanities is designed to provide.

The child learns to talk his own language, and then he is taught to read the literature written in it. His oral mastery is established by the time he begins his formal schooling, but a lifetime will not exhaust even the treasures of his own literature, to say nothing of all the others. To use one more figure, oral fluency relates to reading knowledge somewhat as does a newspaper to a bound book. The newspaper contains some current interest, entertainment, and even stimulus, but most of it is so ephemeral that even last week's paper is utterly dead, and it is only the historian who can find in the older issues of a newspaper anything worth a man's attention. But the bound book may have retained its pristine freshness after hundreds of years, and some of our oldest books have a vitality which time has no power to alter or diminish.

Confronted with a choice between teaching for oral proficiency and for reading mastery, in the establishment of a curriculum for the American college and high school, my own duty as educator and as aspirant to true humanism seems to me clear and inescapable: I must advocate for those who are to come that to which I myself have always clung as the greater good.

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## *Italian Literature in 1948\**

THE Italian literary season fell into a more normal, if limited productivity, due partly to the continued lack of printing facilities, and scarcity of paper and materials. Beset by these difficulties, Italian publishers smarted under their helplessness to bring back the Italian Press to the seniorial and esthetic place it occupied on the international horizon. Financial difficulties, too, continued to make inroads in the quality of formats, paper, illustrations, typesetting, etc. And, to an extent, too, these difficulties limited greatly the quantity of books by new authors. This curtailment of production was perhaps for the best, for looking in retrospect, the previous season (1947) was not one desirable of continuation, with its tendencies toward decadence, large doses of amorality and repulsive realism. Hence, if the 1948 season was not punctuated with great creations, it was marked by contrast, with an obvious groping for a more normal and spiritual attitude toward life in an Italy still beset by so much misery and abject poverty. Literature reflected, perforce, here and there, a benign resignation to a trying and indecisive moment in the destiny of the Italian people. And, once again, literary creation occupied a minor premise on the Italian horizon, yielding a place of major importance to history and politics. Let it be recalled that the victory of the Christian Democrats over the Social Communists and the jostling about of national politics and aspirations relegated all other cultural activities into a more remote and humble background.

The theater, Italy's perennial problem child, lagged far behind the other arts this past season. It continued to be harassed by seemingly insurmountable obstacles and difficulties. The root of this problem lay, to be sure, in the costs of production and the poverty of the stock companies. More so than in the other arts, the after-years of war in the theater have been significant of psychological shiftings and readjustments. Small wonder then that there should be such paucity of native creations and native productions. Under those trying conditions the success of producing any plays in Italy last season was so slim that directors took to producing well-known foreign plays, rather than gamble with the limited funds at their disposal. And so if there was a preponderance of foreign plays, Italy did not show any preference for French plays as against English plays or American. The public gave evidence of its catholic and varied taste, as much enthusiasm was shown for the classic theater, as for Sarte or Saroyan. However, if this can be of any solace to our Italian *confrères*, there has always existed a theater crisis in Italy, and for that matter, where in the

\* An abstract of this article appeared in *The New International Year Book* (New York, 1949).

world has not one heard discussed and bemoaned the eternal question of theater crisis? Even in the hey-day that witnessed so many extraordinary plays of Pirandello and D'Annunzio the familiar cry in those years was "crisis" in the theater. Therefore, when today one speaks of psychological readjustments, one must understand that it is synonymous with gathering strength, fortitude, perseverance for some sort of renaissance in which the Italian theater will as in the other arts emerge fruitful, original, and vital.

Noteworthy also was the continuation of the magazine literature. *Martedì* (Tuesday), a new weekly, was launched by the editors Bompiani of Milan. The weekly is destined to carry installments of the great books of the world so that reading could be brought within the possibility of everyone at a cost infinitely less than the purchase of the famous books. The very reliable and efficient "ICS" (*Italia Che Scrive*) launched some thirty-one years ago by the enterprising editor, Formiggini, continued its regular issues with sharp critical evaluations of almost everything published in Italy. Incidentally, indebtedness is hereby acknowledged to *Italia Che Scrive* for some of the bibliography and critical notes used in these articles. The "ICS" should grace every desk of the professional and student of Italian literature for exhaustive, if not complete information, on Italian publications. *La Rassegna d'Italia* (Gentile, Milan) of which the notable critic, Francesco Flora is managing editor, went into its third year of publication. It is a scholarly and serious review with facsimiles of unpublished letters and materials. It carries as a feature splendid reproductions of paintings of contemporary artists, and in general, offers treatment on the varied arts and culture. It is to be hoped that the quality of the paper used will improve with time. The season saw continuation of *Italy's Life*, a bi-monthly published in Milan. This magazine is printed in English with occasional inclusion of Italian articles and notes. Especially beautiful are the reproductions of art masterpieces and unusual photographic plates of the Italian panorama and landscape. One noted many less errors in typography in recent issues, but now it is to be hoped, that the quality of English used will improve, too. Aldo Garzanti, the energetic publisher of Milan, launched *La Piccola Illustrazione Italiana*. In small format, it is fashioned after the parent review, the famous *Illustrazione Italiana*. Garzanti's new venture comes out monthly. In miniature, it offers all the features of the older and larger review from which it takes its name. This little review enjoyed wide diffusion even in America.

**FICTION.** The literary prize "Ines Fila" was awarded to Marino Moretti for his *Il Fiocco Verde* (Mondadori, Milan). The novel depicted the life of an ecclesiast and the kinswomen that composed his household. Narrated with composure and reflectiveness, the novel is in sharp contrast with some of the sordidly realistic prose that had so penetrated Italian creations of

the previous season. Giuseppe Berto who achieved international fame with *Il Cielo È Rosso* (*The Sky is Red*) several seasons ago, gained the "Firenze" prize for his new novel, *Le opere di Dio* (Macchia, Rome). This novel depicts the misery of a peasant family of five caught between the struggle of two armies in the past war. Again, Berto projected unusual talent in style and story. The tragic end that befalls this helpless family is poignant and masterful. New Directions (New York) will bring out the English version. (See chapter below on "American Publications of Italian Books and Themes.") Carlo Caccioli contributed another novel of serious and spiritual values, *La piccola valle di Dio* (Vallecchi, Florence). A simple and beautiful narration on life in this world of ours, *God's Valley*, it offers a formula for solace and ultimate salvation. Not widely read was the novel, *L'Abisso* (Casella, Naples), contributed by a new-comer, Enzo Amodio. The novel evolves about a supposed manuscript handed by a friend dying in a sanatorium. It deals with the adventures of a young man, the war and impending ruin. In this connection could be mentioned Guido Seborga's *L'uomo di camporosso* (Mondadori, Milan) with direct and incisive style. Here again the story evolves about a young man in revolt against his surroundings. The veteran writer, Aldo Palazzeschi contributed *I fratelli Cuccoli* (Vallecchi, Florence). The "Brothers Cuccoli" represents something of a counterpart to the author's famous, previous novel on the "Sisters Materassi," *Sorelle Materassi*. Though Palazzeschi's novels have not enjoyed diffused international reputation, they have been widely read and acclaimed in Italy. *I fratelli Cuccoli* is a novel of considerable undertaking, of over 500 pages. The critic Aldo Bizzari singled out the work as one of the strongest of the season's contributions. Here is a fragment of the review appearing in "ICS":

"... Non i quattro fratelli, ma il loro padre putativo è il vero protagonista. È il ricco e solitario Celestino Cuccoli il quale, dopo cinquant'anni di vita misuratissima (lui celebe nel ricordo d'un esclusivo amore adolescente e figlio già prigioniero d'una dominante adorazione materna) si desta a vita aperta e piena, facendosi padre d'un colpo di quattro trovatelli che egli rende suoi non solo legalmente ma con tutta la forza dell'animo . . . .

Pur ricco di pagine e di modi realistici, questo romanzo vale soprattutto per quanto sfugge al così detto realismo attraverso aperture continue di grottesco e sublimazione, di deformazione . . . . In tali aperture o fughe si palesa la migliore vena dell'artista. A esse (che rappresentano, oltre le mode e le tentazioni del tempo, una esemplare fedeltà alla vocazione originaria) si deve la vitalità del romanzo e soprattutto la riuscita di quella che appare finora come la più bella figura nella galleria dei personaggi di Palazzeschi: Celestino Cuccoli."

Convenient at this moment, would be to shift from the sentiments and affections of a father to those of a mother. Lucifero Falcone's *Tonna* (Palombi, Rome) is a regional novel about a Calabrese mother who clings

tenaciously and by instinct to a mother's inviolate role of child-bearer. The author brings out the indisputable strength mustered about a woman, no matter how humble in origin, in the role of motherhood with its indestructible and eternal qualities. Riccardo Bacchelli, a writer of long-standing, also contributed a novel on a spiritual plane, *Lo sguardo di Gesù* (Garzanti, Milan). It draws its inspiration from the biblical episodes dealing with Christ's miracles on the possessed of the devil. Two novels on different motifs were contributed by Alfredo Orecchio and Vittorio G. Rossi. Orecchio's *Gli sposi sensibili* (Reanda, Rome) constituted the first volume of a trilogy. It deals with the atmosphere around the small bourgeoisie with its attendant "misery," "morbidity," and "lack of ethics." Rossi's *Preludio alla notte* (Bompiani, Milan) makes fare of the usual story and adventure formula: two young people meet on a steamer and in three short days fall deeply in love, only to part, and just memories to take with them. The novel, though serving a cross-section of the reading public, will certainly not go down as one of distinction. While speaking of adventure novels, one may mention Ugo Betti's *La Piera Alta* (Garzanti, Milan), an addition to the numerous books on mountain climbing with accents on excitement and danger. The book was criticized as being overly stylistic. Libero Bigiaretti received the "Fiugi Prize" for his novel, *Un discorso d'amore* (Garzanti, Milan). The novel, showing some influence of the "existentialism" theme, is composed of a long letter to a former "love."

In the short story output, the venerable name of Vincenzo Cardarelli again appeared in his volume of "reminiscences," couched in poetic vein. The book bore the title of *Villa Tarantola* (Edizione della Meridiana, Rome) and was awarded the "Strega Prize." Nine short stories in "bold" and "violent" moods made up Maria Luisa Astoldi's *La torre del diavolo* (De Fonseca, Rome). Another book of short stories, dipping frequently into the Neopolitan vernacular, with zest and color, was Domenico Rea's *Spaccanapoli* (Mondadori, Milan). This young author writes with effortless simplicity and creates effortless drama at every turn of the page. To be sure, he will be heard of in the future. Ugo Betti had a lively season, for in addition to his novel mentioned above, he found time to assemble nineteen short stories, *Una strana serata* (Garzanti, Milan). The stories are couched in lively idiom and vivid characterizations.

**POETRY AND VARIA:** The poetry prize "S. Balila" went to Giuseppe Ungaretti for his poems, *Il Dolore* (Mondadori, Milan) which constitutes the fourth volume in his series "Vita di un uomo." *Poesie* of Vincenzo Cardarelli, a poet of long-standing, appeared in the Collection "Poeti dello Specchio" (Mondadori, Milan). G. Cimino's volume of poems, *Le Cose* (Gastoldi, Milan) are divided into three groups, "poems on times gone by," "poems on modern times," and "philosophic poems." Umberto



Fraccacreta contributed poems with echoes of Pascoli and D'Annunzio, *Ultimi canti* (Laterza, Bari). One of the best books of poems of the season, receiving praise and adulation, was P. David Turoldi's *Io non ho mani* (Bompiani, Milan). The poems suggest a mystic and sincere exultation. Vincenzo Cardarelli, mentioned above, found time to prepare a volume of essays on poetry, *Solitario in Arcadia* (Mondadori, Milan). These essays are studies and observations on style and color, and on the author himself as man and poet. Giovanni Scalvini published critical studies on three poets, *Foscolo, Manzoni, Goethe* (Einaudi, Turin). It is with regret to note that the ten volumes of Pirandello's complete theater published long before the war in a handsome edition "Opera Omnia" (Mondadori) have all but disappeared from the market. The same publishers have reprinted Pirandello's plays in four volumes in their "Collezione Omnibus" and "Biblioteca Moderna." The first volume contains *Sei personaggi in cerca d'autore, Ciascuno a suo modo, Questa sera si recita a soggetto, L'uomo dal fiore in bocca, Il gioco delle parti, Il piacere dell'onestà, L'imbecille, L'uomo, La bestia e la virtù, Come prima meglio di prima*. The second volume comprises of *Vestire gli ignudi, Come tu mi vuoi, Così è (se vi pare), Tutto per bene, La ragione degli altri, L'innesto, Enrico IV, Diana e la Tuda, La vita che ti diedi*. The third volume is made up of *Sogno (ma forse no), L'amica delle mogli, La morsa, La signora Morli-una e due, Pensaci Giacomino! Lumie di Sicilia, Il berretto a sonagli, La giara, Cecè, Il dovere del medico, Sagra del Signore della Nave, Ma non è una cosa seria, Bellavita, La patente, L'altro figlio, Liolà*. The fourth and last volume in the collection contains *O di uno o di nessuno, Non si sa come, Quando si è qualcuno, Trovarsi, All'uscita, La nuova colonia, Lazzaro, Favola del figlio cambiato, I Giganti della Montagna*. The four volumes are cloth bound, but the quality of paper used to reprint such notable plays is indeed inferior and regrettable. Lastly, in this paragraph on varià could be recorded a volume on contemporary painting by the internationally famous art critic, Lionello Venturi. Hoepli of Milan, publishers specializing in fine quality texts, have brought out this eminent critic's volume, *Pittura Contemporanea*, studiously prepared and in impeccable taste.

#### AMERICAN PUBLICATIONS OF ITALIAN BOOKS AND THEMES.

Of the numerous books prepared in America on Italian and classical subjects Thornton Wilder's *The Ides of March* (Harper & Brothers, New York) easily heads the list. A "fantasia" on the last days of the Roman republic, the book is composed of the bulkhead of letters to set off Caesar's attitudes and actions. It is a charming and articulate book recreating the lives of the great personalities of Rome in and about 45 and 46 A.D. Though the author is modest about the historicity of the work, none-the-less, he does set off a historic mood which is vibrant, convincing, and nostalgic. The book was

read extensively in America last season. A complementary volume to *Idea of March*, or call it rather a companion volume, *A Goddess to a God* (The Macmillan Co., New York) was prepared by the playwright John Balderston and Sybil Bolitho. Cleopatra's dreams and aspiration are exposed in the form of tantalizing letters to Caesar. The charm and studied quality of the prose makes fascinating and hauntingly beautiful reading material. While on the subject of Ancient Rome, passing mention may be made of Thames Williamson's *The Gladiator* (Coward-McCann, New York) which is really a story of Rome. Loretta Murname translated Giovanni Papini's *The Letters of Pope Celestine VI To All Mankind* (E. P. Dutton & Co., New York). A plea to world peace, the author "announces in a preface that he has discovered in an abandoned convent the Latin manuscript containing the lost letters of the 'Confessor-Martyr Pope, Celestine VI,' and, since Celestine 'also lived in a terrible era of storm and blood,' he feels privileged to present them in translation for our consideration at this time." As most of Papini's creations are controversial, he has zealots and enemies among his reading public. The volume, if nothing else, has powerful dramatic strokes in the Papinian tradition. When he writes he is read. In connection with this catholic theme, mention may be made of Naomi Mitchinson's *Blood of The Martyrs* (McGraw-Hill Book Co.—Whittlesey House, New York), the "story of heroic Christians defying unto death the persecutions of Imperial Rome." Dr. Charles de Tolnay brought out the third volume in his series on Michelangelo, *The Medici Chapel* (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N. J.). A monumental study on the supreme artist, the volume constitutes the third of five projected. The price of \$20 for this volume will be within the possibility of only a few of the lovers of art and eclectics. It is made up of 282 pages and 330 plates. At this conclusion, may it be recalled, that mention was made several seasons back in these chronicles on Italian literature, of a young and promising writer, Giuseppe Berto, and the obscure volume at that time was *Il cielo è rosso*. It is most gratifying to note that Giuseppe Berto not only has become famous in Italy, but is an international figure as well. *The Sky Is Red* was translated by Angus Davidson and published by New Directions (New York). It is an "exquisitely wrought novel . . . of wartime poverty, love, suffering and death, told with realism and compassion by a novelist who does not fear the age in which he lives. Its appearance is further proof that Italians have not yielded to the tragic sense of history. Their acceptance of life is simple and, for this reason perhaps, they are producing some of the most sensitive art in recent years."

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## *A Natural Method for Teaching Modern Languages*

IT is with strange feelings that I recall my experiences as a student of foreign languages. I studied Latin, French and English in Vienna, Austria, where I was born. One incident sticks particularly in my mind: I was 12 years old, and it was a lovely spring morning. When the teacher of French entered the classroom, the bright, sunny world outside got dark. The teacher explained the difference between the use of the 'simple past' and the 'imperfect' in French. By the end of the lesson we had learned a few rules, could prove them by some sentences taken out of the book—but neither the rules nor the sentences were of any use to us for a conversation in everyday life . . . not more than Latin rules and examples we were learning. Yet this lovely day could have been the starting point for developing the use of that particular form in French, if our teacher had understood to use *life* as it was offered to her for her teaching. She would have awakened our interest and we should have understood and remembered all our lives: "It *was* a beautiful spring morning. The sky *was* blue, the sun *was* shining, the birds *were* singing when the teacher ENTERED the room."

*To teach a certain peculiarity of a foreign language when the interest is awakened and not when it just fits the teacher's schedule is the first great principle in the successful teaching of foreign languages.*

Still we teachers cannot wait till *life* offers the opportunity of awakening a student's interest. If we did, it would take a *life time* to go through the elements of grammar. We have to help life.

As I was always interested in and very fond of the study of foreign languages, I watched teachers and students at their work, and I found that most pupils learned to read and to understand what they had read, that they acquired some grammatical knowledge of the language, but that they did not understand when they were addressed, and that they were unable to make themselves understood. This was a serious problem, I thought, decisively hampering the pupils' progress. The chief reasons for it appeared to me to be the following ones:

- 1) The text books did not bring to the children things in which they were interested and with which they were familiar.
- 2) The printed language was an obstacle to any pupil's endeavour of expressing himself naturally and freely.

My teaching career began in elementary schools (grade schools). In the

public schools in which I taught, children spoke their native tongue incorrectly, slangily, and they had a poor command of vocabulary. I found myself before the necessity of teaching to these children their mother tongue as if it were a foreign language. Naturally I tried to achieve my aim by letting them talk—about their every day life, about little incidents they had experienced: at home, on the road, on the play ground. My work at these public schools showed me the solution of the two problems I mentioned.

1) The teacher should bring to the children material in which they are interested.

2) The study of foreign languages should be approached in the same way in which a child acquires his or her native tongue.

There are three distinct stages of development:

First stage: The child hears, understands what he has heard, talks.

Second stage: The child learns reading after he has acquired some fluency in talking.

Third stage: When the child has some proficiency in reading he learns writing, spelling and grammar.

It became clear to me that every study of a foreign language should begin early. *Children are fond of chatting*, of playing games, of looking at pictures and discussing them; they are not self-conscious and embarrassed when making a mistake, that is why one gets them to talk even in a foreign language. *Children are fond of imitating what they hear*. They get easily and quickly accustomed to hearing unfamiliar sounds, and imitating them gives them pleasure. By my experience this is the best and easiest way to a good accent. It is by far easier to fit the spelling to a word you can say, than it is to correct the sound of a word you have read with a wrong pronunciation to which you are induced by analogy with a 'similar' word in your native tongue. I am sure that many teachers of French realize how difficult it is to make a student correct his mistake who was used to pronounce "EN-FANT" like 'in'fənt,' "COURAGE" like 'kú'rij,' "QUE" like 'kē'—which last error is almost disastrous because of the French word "QUI" pronounced 'kē.'

The choice of reading material is another reason for an early beginning of the study of foreign languages. The reading sections in our High School and College text books are not on a level with the students' mental standard. They cannot be, because the language must be simple. Books that are written in such an easy language are meant for much younger children.

From this point of view I started foreign language classes for young children and I wrote books for them based on these ideas: *Rire et Apprendre*, *Lachen und Lernen*, *Jack and Daisy Speak English*.<sup>\*</sup> These books were to serve three purposes:

<sup>\*</sup> Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, New York City.

1) To awaken the children's interest in the persons of the book and in their actions.

2) To get the children familiar with obviously difficult points of the foreign language concerning both idiomatic expressions and grammar.

3) To convey the elementary grammar to the children.

ad 1) This aim was to be reached by a story taken from the every day life of two children, containing everything with which a child comes into daily contact. Which child is not interested to hear about a train, a journey to the beach, the forest, a birthday party, a performance at the theater, a Christmas celebration? Looking at the many pictures in these books leads quite naturally to asking and answering questions, to stimulate the using of words the children had learned, the forming of sentences, the combining of these sentences to little stories. And it worked: Many a time my Austrian and English pupils said to me: "I should love to go to France and meet Paul et Marie and their friends."

ad 2) The French language in particular is difficult in its expressions. For an English speaking child it seems long winded, indirect and complicated. By my experience a student can comprehend and retain by ear more than his standard of grammatical knowledge would permit. If we, therefore, undertake the difficult task of bringing the foreign language nearer to the children we can do so by the direct method only. No child will ever get intimate with French expressions if we teachers avoid sedulously the difficult points of the language, such as the great amount of reflexive verbs, the formation of the perfect tense by 'to have' or 'to be', the position of the object expressed by a pronoun, etc., etc. These difficulties should be put before the children at an early stage, and repeatedly—*all of them!* It must become quite a matter of fact for the child to say "*il le porte,*" which at first will sound strange to the English ear. Let us get the children used to it! Not be telling them a rule and letting them do dozens of tedious exercises for which they have no use in practical life. But by speaking to the children again and again in that unusual way. Then they will accept and adopt these phenomena without realizing that they are doing so. They will come to use these forms themselves—subconsciously.

ad 3) When teaching a foreign language in our native country—at two or three lessons a week!—we cannot do away with the teaching of grammar. Yet it is generally dreaded by pupils and teachers. By the children, because they feel bored; by the teachers, because it is very unpleasant to see the signs of boredom unmistakably reflected in the children's faces. The suggested method, therefore, aims at making the teaching of grammar amusing. In this method the inevitable foundations of grammar are not arbitrarily forced upon the children, they are always the result of a game or a story and often explained by a picture. Grammar is never taught unless connected with a "living" text that has the pupils' interest.

After having studied a foreign language for a number of years many students are unable to understand a sentence without understanding every single word in it. In my opinion students should be trained to understand the *sense* of what they hear and read, even if they do not understand every word. Books especially written for the students' age, mental development and standard of knowledge in the foreign language will lead to their discovering that they can read one foreign sentence, two foreign sentences, half a page, a whole page . . . and understand what they are reading without having to translate it word for word into English.

The principles described above apply to the teaching of *every beginner irrespective of his age*, the difference lying in the choice of reading material, and in the requirements of vocabulary and grammar.

For the same reasons which I outlined on page 40 of this paper the stages of development should be again:

*First*: hearing, understanding what the student has heard, and talking only.

*Later*, when the student is quite sure about his sounds: reading.

*Finally*, when the student has acquired a certain fluency in reading: writing, spelling, and grammar.

Naturally the period of time dedicated to stage 1 and 2 should vary according to the students' maturity.

Languages are alive, whereas grammar in itself is dry and dead. Every study of grammar should therefore be connected with a living text *from which it originates and to which it is subordinate*. In order to awaken the students' interest and to connect grammar with life, the form of a story should be retained for all standards, yet varied so as to appeal to young children, to High School or to College students. The text should show how the ability to express oneself grows with the command of vocabulary and wider grammatical knowledge. Our method never offers specially constructed sentences, only those which the student can apply in conversation. Every grammatical peculiarity should be used in a context which makes the students wonder how they could have done without it so long. *The text should always be primary, grammar secondary*. We should never attempt to prepare the text by teaching a grammatical point or idiomatic expression, but both grammar and idioms should be derived from the text.

It is our considered opinion that students trained in this way will encounter little difficulty when entering High School or College or when visiting a foreign country. This is because our method aims at developing the natural faculties of the human mind in attaining mastery of a foreign language.

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## *Foreign Languages in Wartime Intelligence\**

IN THESE days when modern languages are again under attack by many educators, it is gratifying to be able to describe a vital role played by them in the recent past—that of an essential tool in the strategic direction of the war. During the last few years a number of books and articles have been written on various phases of our wartime intelligence services. Some have dealt with overall problems in this field, others have emphasized certain technical aspects, and still others (perhaps too many) have capitalized on the glamorous sidelights and fabulous exploits of the agents of our military and naval intelligence services and of the OSS. To our knowledge, however, none has stressed the important role of foreign languages as a valuable and frequently indispensable instrument in the process of research and analysis in the general sphere of intelligence. Our purpose here, therefore, is briefly to outline some of the ways in which foreign languages were utilized in this field. These will of course not include the more obvious military uses, such as post-combat prisoner-interrogation and in the varied activities of the Army's Counter-Intelligence Corps. More specifically, we will draw our illustrations from the experience of the Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services.

The OSS was an instrument for applying our total intelligence to almost every type of strategic problem we faced in the planning and conduct of the war. The Research and Analysis Branch had the general task of collecting and sorting every available bit of information, secret or public, relating to a given problem and then, through expert evaluation and analysis, transforming the information into strategic intelligence for immediate utilization in a specific situation. OSS analysts had access to the stacks of the Library of Congress, to the files of every government and many private departments and agencies in the United States and, needless to say, they received various types of confidential information from abroad. Obviously, not all the data collected by OSS were printed in the English language. A very large amount was in foreign languages, and because of the wide-spread theaters of war, these latter included all the major and many of the minor tongues of the globe.

\* The writer was a research analyst in Latin American political and economic developments during the war years in Washington, D. C. From 1942 to 1945 he was a member of the Latin American Division in the Research and Analysis Branch of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), and from 1945 to 1947 he served in a similar capacity in the Office of Research and Intelligence of the Department of State.

The Research and Analysis Branch of the OSS was composed of geographical Divisions, each of which was charged with the analysis of numerous political and economic problems directly related to the war effort in various areas of the world. Research was conducted on both long-term and short-term bases. A request might be received for a study of the development and significance of an anti-United States political or social movement abroad, while another might entail an on-the-spot effort to quickly gather all available information on a given problem and terminate in a valuable estimate of the situation as an aid to the formulation of policy.

Consideration of the various tasks which might be faced by a hypothetical research division will serve to emphasize the ways in which languages were utilized. Professional personnel of the division might well be composed of geographers, cartographers, political and social scientists, historians, anthropologists, linguists and editors. Many, if not most of these, would have resided abroad for long periods of time. All of them, with reference to their special fields, would already have a good reading knowledge of one or, more probably, several foreign languages. And all of them, as a result of their activities in the division, would soon develop an expert working knowledge of the languages utilized, as well as an ever-growing technical vocabulary of increasing utility as their assignments become more complex and varied. For example, the preparation of a report to be used by the commander of one of our task forces about to occupy a foreign country or area might call into play the services of every one of the experts in the division. And the basic bonding uniting their efforts would be the language or languages of the area. For the strategic intelligence required would of necessity be derived principally from foreign-language sources, some in the native language, some in other foreign languages. Intelligence relating to the ports, topography, climate, communications, etc., together with maps of the area to be occupied, would come from the geographers and cartographers, while that relating to economic and social conditions, as well as a realistic survey of the politics and government of the area, would be the task of the division's economists, social and political scientists. The linguists would clarify any difficulties in translation, idiomatic usage, localisms, etc., found in the sources and might also be called on to compile a glossary of useful terms in the area language for the occupying troops.

Other assignments requiring an intimate knowledge of foreign languages might be primarily of a political nature. The continued analysis of political stability and the development of subversive groups, especially in key countries where unbroken friendly relations with the United States were highly desirable, was obviously of great strategic importance during the war. The same could be said of countries in which popular sympathies wavered between the Axis and the Allies. For this type of analysis perhaps the most

valuable single source of information was the foreign press.<sup>1</sup> And anyone who has followed political developments through the daily press of a major foreign country will recognize not only the exacting nature of the task but also the detailed knowledge of the national language and psychology it requires. A report on an anti-United States group abroad might easily call for the rapid assimilation of a mass of foreign-language propaganda (both radio and printed), of enemy documents captured in the wake of battle, and perhaps of secret information from the underground within the country itself. In other words, a report might often be requested on a problem about which not one word had been printed in English. Reasons of security prevent the inclusion of further and more specific illustrations. Enough has been said, however, to make abundantly clear the vital but unpublicized role played by foreign languages in the strategic direction of the war.

Today languages are being used in ways quite similar to those described above in our national peacetime intelligence service, the Central Intelligence Agency at Washington, as well as in other government agencies. These facts should gratify those of us who believe in the teaching of modern languages in the United States, for they proved to be a vitally needed tool in a time of great peril. It is at the same time a sad commentary on human nature that a world-wide catastrophe was required to make clear the need of these new and important uses for languages, since there is no doubt that, properly employed, languages are also our most important weapons for permanent peace.

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<sup>1</sup> The Research and Analysis Branch received via airmail the leading newspapers from abroad and the chief foreign periodicals in every important field.

## Thinking of Studying in Spain?

HAVING recently returned from six months spent in Spain and France doing research for a thesis on Juan Valera, I was surprised that whereas France is inundated with literally thousands of Americans studying everything from literature and art to economics and cooking, there are only a handful, mostly Puerto Rican veterans, studying in Spain. Of course, Americans interested in Spanish find Mexico much more accessible, but the dearth of Americans in Spain is in part due to ignorance. People simply do not know what educational facilities are available; they give credence to rumors that is difficult to get in Spain, and that life there is inordinately expensive. Perhaps my experiences may prove helpful to others considering studying there.

In the first place a visa is readily obtained from any Spanish consul, although Spanish visas do cost more than those for most other countries. Entrance into Spain is easy. Spanish and Italian steamers call regularly at Vigo, Lisbon, Gibraltar, etc. A quicker and cheaper way is by boat to Cherbourg via the Cunard or French Line and then by train to Spain. Warning—Spanish trains are pretty poor!

For most Spaniards life nowadays is exceedingly difficult. Laborers earn as little as 50 to 75 cents a day, with food and clothing not much cheaper than in the states. The lower classes are on near-starvation rations and the incidence of TB is frighteningly high. But for Americans with dollars everything is obtainable. Although foreign imports are fantastically high (a 1949 Ford might cost as much as \$5,000, and a gallon of gas sells for around 75 cents), the necessities are cheap. One can obtain room and board in a very decent *pension* for \$1 to \$1.50 a day. A sub-way ride costs a penny, and the best theater seats sell for from 50 cents to a dollar. Veterans would have no trouble living very well on their GI allowance.

There are few restrictions governing foreigners. One is supposed to exchange dollars at the official tourist rate of 25 pesetas to the dollar, although one can get from 30 to 35 on the black market, which incidentally operates much less openly than in France or Italy.

Much more important is the lack of freedom. There is strict censorship of the press and all papers follow the official, government line. Censorship extends to literature. Naturally no criticism of the church is tolerated, but even novels or plays treating a disagreeable, realistic situation may be banned. The result is that little first rate literature is being produced in Spain today, except perhaps in poetry.

The regime is trying to build up the universities. The new buildings

being constructed at the University of Madrid to replace those destroyed during the Civil War are most handsome and positively luxurious. The *Consejo superior de investigaciones científicas*, an organization created to promote research also has a fine lay-out and considerable funds for publications. But although the physical plants are impressive, the intellectual atmosphere is not overly stimulating. Franco has not interfered with academic freedom as much as might be expected, but still censorship has left its imprint on the universities.

Unfortunately the educational set-up leaves much to be desired; Spanish universities fall far short of French standards. Since the professors are badly paid, some making as little as \$50 a month, they usually hold down several additional jobs. Being either busy or lazy, they hire young assistants to substitute for them. One eminent professor met his class twice all year long, the first day of school and the last. Others are more conscientious and seldom miss, but by and large the atmosphere is most casual.

There are no diplomas or degrees of consequence available to American students comparable to the various one and two year degrees granted by French universities. Spanish students attend the university five years and then obtain their preliminary degree. Upon completing an additional thesis they receive the doctorate. Few Americans would care to pursue such an extended program, and there are no shorter ones offered. All the foreign student can do is enroll as an "alumno de curso libre" in several subjects and upon passing the final exams, he will receive a certificate stating he has satisfactorily completed the courses. Such certificates would probably carry little weight in the United States.

There are twelve universities in Spain—Madrid, Barcelona, Zaragoza, Valencia, Murcia, Seville, Granada, Santiago, Oviedo, Valladolid, Salamanca, and La Laguna (Canary Islands). Only Madrid and Barcelona have all the departments, whereas literature is also offered at Murcia, Granada, La Laguna, Oviedo, and Salamanca. Foreign students should probably stay clear of Barcelona, for Catalans by preference use their own dialect, and usually speak rather poor Spanish. Foreigners will also encounter language difficulties in Valencia, Murcia, and Andalusia. For he who wishes to study in the provinces, Salamanca, Oviedo, or Zaragoza should all prove satisfactory, but Madrid would probably be the most stimulating. Since the present regime is building up that university, most of the best professors are concentrated there. In addition Madrid is the cultural center of the country. The best music and the best theater (although it must be admitted the Spanish theater is now in a moribund state) are found in Madrid, and the majority of intellectuals live there.

The courses for foreigners, held in different cities of Spain during the year, are specially designed to interest visitors, and every year they are attended by large groups of French, English, Swiss, Scandinavians, and a

sprinkling of Americans. The most popular one is held in August at Santander, that beautiful summer resort. Other sessions are held at Madrid in the fall and spring, at Malaga during the winter, at Santiago, Oviedo, Barcelona, Segovia, Burgos, La Rábida (Huelva), and Jaca in the foothills of the Pyrenees during the summer. These courses usually last four or five weeks. The work consists largely of lectures on grammar, phonetics, history, art, and literature, although there is usually some oral drill in the use of the language. The professors are generally top-notch, and as they actually give their own lectures, the work, although elementary, is very enjoyable. The course at Jaca lasts eight weeks and is sufficiently advanced so that it is attended by many Spaniards as well as foreigners.

Those who go to Spain for purposes of research will be delighted. It is positively exhilarating to find in a library any Spanish book you want or a complete file of *La España Moderna* without having recourse to Interlibrary loan. The Ateneo in Madrid, which anyone can join by paying a nominal fee, has a fine collection of books, is open from 9 A.M. to 2 A.M., and has a delivery service which puts most American libraries to shame. The National Library and the Hemeroteca have even more material, although it is less accessible. Spaniards are the most friendly and hospitable of people, and I found everyone extremely helpful. In Cabra, Valera's birthplace, nothing was too much trouble. The inhabitants of the house where Valera was born were delighted to show me through; one man hastened over with some letters Valera had written to his grandfather; and the director of the municipal library placed all the material he had at my disposition.

Research students fortunate enough to visit Spain will find themselves in the promised land, while beginners will be well pleased with the courses for foreigners. Only for those in between will the Spanish educational system be somewhat unsuitable. But the opportunity of living in Spain and of immersing oneself in Spanish culture will certainly outweigh these disadvantages. In spite of all our recent preoccupation with Latin-America, Spain (and particularly Madrid) is still the cultural center of the Spanish speaking world.

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## *The Teaching of English in Latin America*

LIKE many another Spanish teacher I have frequently been rather awed by the seeming facility for learning English of the majority of the Latin Americans with whom I have come into contact. If it is true, as everyone insists, that English is a much more difficult language than Spanish, why is it that one has to have bulldog tenacity to find a place to exercise one's Spanish in many parts of Mexico, while even our best students all too often take the line of least resistance and converse in their native tongue whenever possible? Is some strange quirk of nature responsible, or must we attribute the Latin American's language ability to superior methods of teaching?

It was partly with a view to finding the answer to this riddle, which had become practically an obsession, that I took a leave of absence from Baker University in 1944 and accepted a position in the Instituto Pan-Americano in Panama City. Panama City is, of course, bilingual because of the proximity of the United States-controlled Canal Zone, and the need for the second language is too obvious to need discussion. One of the main objectives of the Instituto Pan-Americano, a big primary and secondary school of the Methodist church, is the preparation of young people for bilingual secretarial work. The language motivation is there at its strongest, and even though the school was working at full capacity to take care of over 900 students who came in two complete daily shifts,<sup>1</sup> the director was forced to turn away many more applicants than he could accept.

I think I almost came to the conclusion that motivation was the whole answer to the problem—that with sufficient motivation the battle was won. I became very critical. What we in the United States would consider good proficiency in a foreign language was no longer enough. Nothing less than perfection was enough. Then I began teaching at the National University of Panama, and got a bit of perspective on the matter.

The social and economic motivations were certainly as great, but there we got the products of all the schools in Panama, and it was brought home to me rather violently that even there, in a bilingual community, the foreign language is certainly not just absorbed. After entrance examinations many high school graduates were put into beginning English classes in the university, although English is a required course in all schools, and many others were ready only for intermediate work. The advanced classes were composed almost exclusively of the West Indians who spoke English in their homes,

<sup>1</sup> A new building has since been constructed which has relieved this crowded situation.

and of the graduates of the Instituto Pan-Americano and one or two other schools. Since methodology must, therefore, have more to do with it than I had realized, I took another good look at the way English was being taught in the Instituto.

Our best language students were those who entered the first grade and came up through the comparatively small primary school. Each room had two teachers who alternated in two grades, spending the morning in one and the afternoon in the other. One of these teachers handled all the Spanish instruction, and the other taught only the English subjects. The students came to the first year of secondary school very adequately prepared in English, and throughout the next five years remained head and shoulders above students of the other three sections which were taken in at that time. On entering the school in first-year secondary, these new students were given as much work in English as possible—grammar, reading, spelling, history, geography, health, etc. Their progress was necessarily slow at first, since many of them came without any previous knowledge of the language, but by the third year they were beginning to express themselves fairly adequately both orally and in writing. By the time they had completed their commercial work, which included typing taught from English texts, bookkeeping, and English shorthand, the majority were quite proficient.

After a few months in Panama, I could see that it was not in my destiny to leave Latin America after only a year, so I made arrangements to cancel my leave of absence. When I had spent nearly two years teaching at the Instituto and the University, I was made director of Lima High School, a large Methodist girls' school in Lima, Peru.

One would have thought that the motivation for English study in Peru would be much less than in Panama, but I found there an appreciation for its utility and an eagerness to master it that were quite astounding. "But it is necessary that my daughter learn English! We must all learn English in these days when our relations with the United States are so important!" That was the oft-repeated plea of parents begging admission into the school for their daughters. This was no propaganda talk. They were very much in earnest. To them a knowledge of English meant everything they held important—all their dreams. It might mean a good position with an American firm at twice the salary paid by local companies. It might mean opportunities for advanced study in the States. It might mean the opportunity to contribute their bit as a secretary in the United Nations, where seven of our graduates are employed today. It might even mean an American husband! But whatever their ambition, they knew that language proficiency was important!

Those who failed to gain admission to the few American- or British-directed schools, where instruction was carried on largely in English, chose those which seemed to offer the best substitute in that language instruction.

Thousands of students, graduates, and workers flocked to the American Cultural Institute and enrolled in their English courses or used their library facilities. National teachers took their very fine advanced courses to perfect their pronunciation and learn—yes, really!—American methods of teaching this foreign language—English. Moreover, I found in my travels, this fire of enthusiasm was burning all over South and Central America. Everywhere cultural institutes were flourishing, and even in countries where schools under the direction of foreigners are forced to teach only in the language of the country, there was a deep appreciation of the value of language study which we language teachers from the United States could only regard with envy.

Because of the eagerness and receptivity of the students, effective language instruction became, along with character development, one of our guiding passions at Lima High School. The American staff was much more adequate than in Panama. Though the majority of the teachers were Peruvian, nearly all those in primary were our own graduates and completely bilingual. For that reason we did not find it necessary to have different teachers for Spanish and English work, though the proportion of time spent on study in the two languages was approximately equal. We departmentalized in certain subjects, and each grade had at least two subjects, one of which was conversation, with North American teachers.

English instruction began in the first grade where six-year-olds were learning to read Spanish and English simultaneously. Standard American primers were used, and the children learned, almost from the first day, to answer in English questions over what they were reading. Numbers and spelling were also learned in both languages, and songs and games in English accustomed the children to the sound and use of the language. Commands were given in English from the beginning, and the little girls acquired facility in answering simple, every-day questions, such as "What is your name?" "Where do you live?" "How old are you?" and the like. Conversation classes began in earnest the second year and continued through the fifth year of primary instruction. The classes were divided into smaller groups, and descriptions of pictures, games, dramatizations of everyday situations (such as selecting foods in the cafeteria line, buying train or bus tickets, directing strangers, etc.), retelling stories given orally, and the like were among the methods used. In the last two years of primary, emphasis on written composition largely replaced that previously given to oral composition, since by that time the girls were already studying and reciting on a great variety of subjects in English, and conversing with ease.

For high school work, a second section, made up of students from other schools, was admitted by special examination for language capacity. Only thirty from as many as one hundred fifty applicants could be admitted, and needless to say the selection was a difficult one to make. These thirty hand-

picked girls were put through a year of intensive English study, for which they received no credit, in preparation for continuing their secondary instruction in English. Often they were willing to sacrifice two and even three years of secondary study as well by repeating that much previously completed work after they had finished this "Special English" course. For a year they saw, read, wrote, and thought nothing but English. Their course of study included English grammar, reading, conversation, spelling, and, later in the year when the fundamentals were well established, health, history, Bible, and geography in preparation for the courses they would be required to handle in first-year secondary. The direct method was used almost entirely except for necessary grammatical explanations. Comprehension developed at a rapid rate, and by the end of the year the girls were able to face a strange examiner, pick up a piece of unfamiliar narrative material, read it orally, close the book, and summarize it or answer questions on it orally with very little hesitation. In facility of oral expression and breadth of vocabulary they still lagged behind the students who had completed seven years of primary instruction in our school, but were able to equal and even surpass some in grammatical accuracy of written composition.

During the following five years they studied in English virtually all their courses except Peruvian history and geography, civics, some of the sciences, and Spanish itself. They read literature from the English classics usually introduced on the college level in this country, and their examinations were not résumés, but critical evaluations. Because they had learned their grammar the hard, painstaking way, they were often shocked, on continuing their studies in this country, by the grammatical ignorance of North American college freshmen. More than once North American employers have told me that our Peruvian graduates are not only good English secretaries, but the best they have ever had. Naturally we feel amply rewarded for our efforts, but it is interesting to note that despite years of instruction in English, most of it with North American teachers, few of our girls are able to speak it without a noticeable accent!

What is one to conclude, then? Certainly not that Latin Americans are endowed with some God-given language facility that enables them to outstrip their northern neighbors! Rather, I should say, that there is comfort to be drawn from the realization that given the same backing from families and government, the same motivation, and the same opportunities and facilities for intensive and prolonged study, language teachers in the United States could certainly accomplish results just as satisfactory.

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## Elevator Hebrew

**S**HLISHÍ, you hear as the elevator in our four-story school building approaches the third floor, and Jimmy the elevator man stops on three. No, this is not an elevator in Tel-Aviv. We are now in a New York City high school building, but the operator already knows that *shlishí* in Hebrew means third. The students and teachers on the elevator are further puzzled and amused when, upon stepping out of the elevator, I say to Jimmy, "Todáh," (Thank you) and he, smiling, promptly answers "*Bevakasháh*," (You're welcome).

But these are not the only Hebrew words our friendly and inquisitive elevator operator has learned in the last few months. He also knows the words *kain* (yes), *lo* (no), *nachón*<sup>1</sup> (correct), *adón* (Mr.), and *gvéret* (Miss). Since I have numerous occasions to use the elevator in the building, Jimmy now understands what the Hebrew words *martéf*, *rishón*, *shainí*, *shlishí*, *reví't* mean respectively, basement, first, second, third, fourth.

On one of the trips during my free period, I was alone with Jimmy on the elevator. I informed him that he practically knows the days of the week in Hebrew.

"But how is that possible? You never taught them to me," said Jim.

"Very simple," I answered. "I have heard you use the Hebrew words *Yom Kippúr* (Day of Atonement). Well, *yom* means day and *Kippúr* means atonement. When you say *yom rishón* it means first day or Sunday and *yom shainí* is second day or Monday." Then I asked Jimmy how he would say Tuesday in Hebrew. He promptly answered, "*Yom shlishí*," and Wednesday—"Yom *reví't*."

"And how would you say 'Thursday,' 'Friday,' 'Saturday'?" asked Jim eagerly.

"Well, that's very easy. All you have to know are the Hebrew words *chamishí*,<sup>2</sup> *shishí*, *shvi't* which mean fifth, sixth, seventh respectively. Add the word *yom* before each word and you have *yom chamishí* (Thursday), *yom shishí* (Friday), *yom shvi't* (Saturday)."

Jimmy pronounced the words after me. He was very serious at this point. All went well. He pronounced every word clearly and distinctly. The only trouble he had was with the sound "*ch*" in the word *chamishí*. However, after some practice he was delighted to be able to pronounce this strange and at first difficult sound that we encountered in our Hebrew words. After we had reviewed all the days of the week, I asked Jimmy for

<sup>1</sup> *nachon*, the "ch" as in the German word "Nacht".

<sup>2</sup> *chamishi*, the "ch" as above.

the English word sometimes used for the day of rest and he came forth with the word "Sabbath."

"That's right. This word is derived from the Hebrew word *Shabbát* meaning rest. *Shabbát* then is the seventh day of the week, Saturday."

We still had about a minute or so before the bell and we went through all the words from *yom rishón* through *Shabbát* once again. When the bell rang, Jimmy opened the elevator door, gave me a cheerful "*todáh*." "*Bevakasháh*," I called out as I walked away to my classroom on the third floor.

Now many students and members of the faculty call out their floors in Hebrew. There is general merriment and good cheer on the elevator even during the trying days of midterms. New passengers are quickly initiated into the elements of "elevator Hebrew" and they at once apply it by calling out their floors in Hebrew.

The other day Jimmy wanted to know the Hebrew word for elevator which, I told him, was *ma'alít*. When he repeated the word correctly, I complimented him by saying he was a *talmíd tov* (good student)—("talmíd"—student, "tov"—good).

"In Hebrew, unlike English," I explained, "the noun precedes the adjective. And what does *yom tov* mean?"

"A good day," answered Jim.

"And *yom tov* is also the Hebrew for holiday," I added. Jimmy then asked me how to say "teacher" in Hebrew.

"*Moréh*," I answered.

"Well," said Jim pointing at me and smiling, "*moréh tov*." Now it was my turn to say, "*Todáh*" and my apt student replied, "*Bevakasháh*."

The next morning when I arrived at school and opened the door, which almost faces the elevator, there came Jimmy's greeting to me, "*Shalóm moréh!*" And this time, instead of responding with my usual *shalóm*, I said "*Bóker tov*, Jimmy." But I had to explain to him in passing that *bóker* means morning. "And therefore, Jimmy, what would *bóker tov* mean?"

"Good morning," exclaimed Jimmy and he promptly added, "*Bóker tov*, *moréh*."

Now we have words of greeting for the morning, noon and afternoon. *Bóker tov* for the morning and *shalóm* for any time of the day or night. *Shalóm* means peace, but in our school elevator it also means fun and good cheer.

When we apply a somewhat similar attitude and procedure to the aural-oral approach in our Hebrew language classes,<sup>3</sup> we find to our great satisfaction that in a short time our students can understand and use quite a number of common, useful phrases and classroom expressions. We may ride in an elevator for years and never use more English words than are expressed

<sup>3</sup> About 6,500 students are now studying modern Hebrew in the secondary schools and colleges of New York City.



in the few Hebrew words and phrases mentioned above. The same is true of our classes. Most of what we say is but a repetition of the same daily commands, questions and phrases. Why not use them in the language the student is there to learn? Every foreign language teacher knows what this sense of mastery in comprehension and oral expression, even on a limited scale, does to the student and class. For a first year student to be able to say "I understand and speak Hebrew" is a great satisfaction, and it serves as excellent motivation for his wishing to master the printed word, and eventually to express himself in writing.

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SOMEWHERE—AREN'T WE ALL?

Let me shake your hand, stranger,  
I know you don't understand  
These words I am saying, stranger,  
But you know the warm clasp of my hand  
Is a sign you are welcome, stranger,  
To this land that is bright with new hope,  
To the land of your heart's wishes, stranger,  
Where joy's within everyman's scope.

I don't care what language you've spoken,  
I don't care what land you are from,  
I open my heart to you, stranger,  
What's important is that you have come.  
You come with a heart tired and heavy,  
So now as one friend to another  
I'll call you a stranger no longer—  
You are home—welcome, welcome, my brother!

—DOLORES MORGANSTON ALLEN  
*University of Michigan*

## *The Foreign Language Club as an Extra-Curricular Activity*

IN recent years there appears to be considerable weight attached to the study of modern foreign languages not only in the university but in the secondary school as well. Quite possibly such trends are largely owing to the fact that the United States is no longer "isolated" from international affairs, be they of a political, cultural, or commercial nature. Language teachers have taken cognizance of these significant factors, especially of the growing importance of the United States in world affairs, and have capitalized upon them by introducing into the college and high-school curriculum foreign language courses which embrace numerous phases of political, geographical, historical, and social aspects of a given foreign life, to mention but a few. It is through these media that educators in the language field have hoped to broaden the scope of their subject matter beyond the realm of mere grammar and reading. Of course, these area studies have not been confined to the four walls of the classroom alone; on the contrary, they have branched out into the extra-curricular field, most notably in language clubs and honorary societies, thanks to the farsightedness of many instructors.

It is with the role of foreign language clubs as an extra-curricular activity in the high school that this present report purports to deal, but it is hoped at the same time that the aims and objectives, as well as the many implications involved, may prove equally applicable to the college language club as well.

Primarily the language club, so far as organization and structure are concerned, is essentially the same as any other club, and its philosophy, although unique in itself, most definitely comprises those virtues which encourage a growth in the individual and which afford him the opportunity of working in harmony with others to achieve a common purpose. If the club fails to comply with this basic philosophy, then its true purposes are being neglected, and its function amounts to little more than a sporadic gathering of too many or too few who have attended the meeting either to escape complete boredom at home or to gauge the worthwhileness of the organization in terms of the quality and quantity of the refreshments served!

If we move now to those objectives which specifically identify the organization as a modern foreign-language club, we shall most certainly wish to include several of the subsequent aims proposed:

1. To provide the student with an opportunity to use the language informally with his instructors and fellow students outside of class.
2. To aid the student in using the language under practical circumstances and thus help him to view it as a *living* medium of communication.
3. To develop in the student a knowledge and appreciation of a given foreign culture.
4. To encourage in the student a more tolerant, sympathetic, and understanding attitude toward the customs and manners of those people whose language he is studying.
5. To allow the student an opportunity to participate directly in some of the activities most commonly pursued by the foreign people. (Dancing, singing, play-acting, preparation of some foreign dishes, etc.)
6. To cultivate social adaptability by encouraging personal contacts with the people of another country.
7. To cultivate in students a willingness to cooperate with other language departments and thus strive for an interdepartmental program, if possible, during the year.

The above set of objectives does not aim at completeness, for each instructor will entertain his own particular notions about the objectives of a language club. However, it is the view of the writer that most good language organizations ought to include a definite list of goals toward which they can continuously strive, and additionally for the purpose of knowing exactly what the club stands for!

Before a foreign-language club is initiated into the extra-curricular program, several important factors must be taken into consideration. Let us enumerate and discuss them briefly:

*The Needs and Interests of Students:* If the club is earnestly desired by a sufficient number of students who are truly willing to accept responsibility for a good part of its management and to foster its productiveness as an extra-curricular activity, then these are fairly conclusive indications that a club is needed.

*Preparation of the Faculty Member in the Specific Area:* It is naturally to be assumed that the moderator of the language club will be the instructor himself, since possibly he is best qualified to supplement the programs with the appropriate materials on the foreign country as well as serving as "technical adviser" in the launching of student projects. The instructor, moreover, appears the most likely source of information toward whom the students might turn for advice and encouragement.

If, in the event that the instructor is unwilling or even incapable of acting as faculty adviser, then a decided problem is posed. Either plans for the organization might best be discontinued, or possibly another faculty member in an allied field might be requested to assist.

Once these objectives have been arrived at, the needs and interests provided for, and the adviser selected, then the necessity for a constitutional

assembly is in order. The principles embodied in the constitution should reflect the desires of the students as a whole. Additionally, the document should include the name, purpose, and/or philosophy of the organization. Moreover, it should indicate size, membership, initiation, fees, and the time, place, and frequency of the language club meetings.<sup>1</sup>

Club preparation should be based upon certain standards if it hopes to achieve any reasonable degree of success, and the experience of the writer in directing a number of foreign-language club activities has led him to observe the following precautions: (a) the program should be carefully prepared well in advance; (b) the committees in charge of launching the program should be selected discriminately; (c) the program itself should be within the interest and understanding of the group as a whole; (d) some part of the program should be of contributive value to the students; (e) it is inadvisable to attempt to "intellectualize" the program, especially in the high school; (f) the use of the foreign language should be encouraged as much as possible, for the organization is not an English club; (g) all students should be made to feel that they are welcome; (h) let as many as practicable offer a contribution to the program; and (i) the adviser must not have a monopoly on the selection of club programs, but he should supervise them in a cooperative and understanding manner.

The splendid response accorded to language clubs over the years by instructors and students has been so great that at the present time language clubs represent the largest membership group in a surprisingly large number of schools. This fact alone should serve to motivate instructors to do the best they possibly can to maintain such an enviable position. The possibilities of a language club are great to be sure, and any instructor who is desirous of whipping up the interests of his students ought to give the club serious consideration as an extra-curricular activity. It is a resourceful individual indeed who can bring his students to realize that the scope of the foreign language is not restricted to endless rehashing of grammatical rules and unexciting reading. The foreign-language club can be made a functioning, living activity and a rewarding experience for all . . . which most certainly it should be, and for which it is cardinally intended!

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<sup>1</sup> For a more detailed discussion of club constitutions and their articles, see, McKown, Harry, C. *Extra-Curricular Activities*, pp. 160 through 191. Macmillan Company, New York; 1947.

## *Albert Thibaudet on the Control of Ideas*

IN RECENT months serious-minded educators have been pointing out to all those interested in education for democratic living certain trends which might prove inimical to such education. From some, for example, has come the reminder, in the name of Thomas Jefferson, that we must tolerate error in the news as in the universities and that any over-zealous attempt to "guarantee the right," however well-intentioned, is a step toward the destruction of democracy.<sup>1</sup> With the Subversive Activities Control Act cited as merely a larger symptom of a disease epidemic throughout the country—a disease evidenced by the capitulation of the press in its approval of compulsive pressures on school boards and trustees—we have been told that Jefferson would hardly have understood our use of the term liberty if in its name we attempt to control the speech, the thoughts, and the intellectual investigations of our citizens.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it has been said that, if our term "freedom of enterprise" should come to include only money-making enterprise, with science and literature, scholarship and teaching deprived of equal freedom, our society is likely to become what Hitler said it already was, a plutocracy.<sup>3</sup>

By others it has been implied that this subtle current of control follows as a corollary a gradual deviation from the ideal of international cooperation and a growing, if not openly acknowledged, spirit of nationalism. Social scientists have felt impelled to caution that "education in all its forms must oppose national self-righteousness and strive to bring about a critical and self-disciplined assessment of our own and other forms of social life."<sup>4</sup> More than that, we have been warned that collective egoism is hardly the state of mind from which come enlargements of brotherhood and justice—of democracy—and that, with the whole history of human conflict a chronicle of warring self-interest masked in high moral pretensions, Americans must

<sup>1</sup> Earl L. Vance, "The News: Fourth Dimension of Education," *AAUP Bulletin*, vol. 34, Autumn 1948, no. 3, p. 564.

<sup>2</sup> Julian P. Boyd, "Subversive of What?" *AAUP Bulletin*, vol. 34, Autumn 1948, no. 3, pp. 532-33.

<sup>3</sup> Christian Gauss, "Can We Live With Our Enemies," *The American Scholar*, Winter 1948-49, vol. 18, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> "Tensions Affecting International Understanding," *AAUP Bulletin*, vol. 34, Autumn 1948, no. 3, p. 547.

beware of that insidious form of self-assertion which claims divine sanction for its individual ends.<sup>5</sup>

In view of this particular tenor of present-day thought, it might be interesting to follow a similar battle of ideas waged in France by at least one French professor during the period encompassing the two World Wars. Perhaps this teacher of literature and language, a true representative of the humanistic approach, may stimulate those of us who claim a place among the Humanities to ask what path we must be willing to follow if we are not to abdicate that position entirely. This man was Albert Thibaudet, one of France's leading twentieth-century literary critics. Born in 1874 into a France crushed by a national inferiority complex, the resulting of her humiliating defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, Thibaudet was to witness in the 1880's a resurgence of French Nationalism, which was to continue and which he was to challenge until his death in 1936.

This Nationalist movement was not a homogeneous one, but the author Paul Bourget may be considered as one of its first spokesman, for, reacting against some of the philosophical developments of the preceding decades, he urged a return to traditional political and religious doctrines and, beyond that, the controls necessary to insure such a return. In 1889 he published his well-known novel, *Le Disciple*, which deals with the crime of a young student who misapplies the principles taught by his philosopher-teacher. Though the teacher is a quiet, inoffensive old man, with no thought of undermining the bases of morality, the student—and behind him Bourget—hold the old man responsible. The portrait of Adrien Sixte, the teacher, is, in part at least, a representation of Bourget's former master, Hippolyte Taine, whose teaching Bourget now repudiates. It is not merely the rejection of Taine's ideas, however, which makes the book significant. A reaction against the materialism of the preceding years was inevitable, and others besides Bourget and his Nationalist confreres were to oppose the philosophy of determinism. What is more important is Bourget's thesis, set forth in his preface, that every writer is inevitably responsible for the influence of his ideas, and the implication, as a necessary corollary, that only the "right" ideas should be presented. Bourget's book is dedicated to "Un Jeune Homme," one about whom he knows nothing except that he is over eighteen and not quite twenty-five, searching in the volumes of his elders the answers to questions which torment him. Since, writes Bourget, his moral life, and, therefore, the moral life of France herself depend upon the answers which he receives, there can be no "honnête homme de lettres" who will not tremble at his responsibility when he reflects that in the hands of this group will lie, twenty years hence, the fate of France. With Bourget and the other traditionalists certain that they had the key to all the "right" ideas, then

<sup>5</sup> Lincoln Barnett, "God and the American People," *Reader's Digest*, January, 1949, p. 37. (Condensed from *Ladies' Home Journal*.)



it naturally followed that theirs were the ones which the "honnête homme de lettres" would present.

In 1889 Thibaudet was only fifteen, not quite old enough to be one of the group to whom Bourget had addressed his preface. Three years later he entered the Lycée Henri-Quatre, where he was to fall, not under the influence of the Nationalists, but rather under that of Henri Bergson, whose philosophy was likewise opposed to the determinism of Taine. Yet, though Bergson also re-emphasized positive moral values, drawing from his theory of the *durée* an argument for relative human liberty, there was in his teaching a concept which was to lead Thibaudet down a path quite different from the one followed by the disciples of Bourget. From Bergson's conception of the *élan vital* as one which flows not in one unforeseeable direction but in many, Thibaudet came to believe that "le doute positif consiste à reconnaître dans la pluralité une habitude de Dieu,"<sup>6</sup> that the truth has many facets, and that progress toward ultimate truth can come only through the understanding and pooling of a variety of conceptions of the universe and the extraction of the best from each.

It would have been impossible, then, for Thibaudet to agree to any limitation upon thought or any undue emphasis, thorough Frenchman though he was, upon French superiority. From the First World War on his essays condemn the extreme Nationalist spirit in France as a deterrent to the development of both arts and sciences and as a step toward the isolation of France from the rest of the world. Not that he was unrealistic or that he assumed the idealist's position "au-dessus de la mêlée." When war broke out in 1914, he gave up his teaching position to serve his country faithfully, if humbly, reaching the apogee of his military career, according to his brother, when he was appointed corporal. If, however, he admits the necessity for some controls during a war, he never retreats from his conviction that in time of peace controls sanctioned in any name whatsoever will eventually halt the progress of the human race. He writes in 1932:

L'âme d'un vieux pays ne peut s'exprimer que par un pluralisme d'idées, pluralisme d'idées dont un extrême péril peut faire, comme en 1914 (c'est la définition que Ribot donne de l'attention) un monoïdéisme momentané, mais qui, une fois disparues les causes qui produisaient l'attention et la tension, revient à un polyidéisme normal.<sup>7</sup>

To shape the minds of the rising generation of Frenchmen in the circumscribed manner advocated by Bourget was to Thibaudet a betrayal of that kind of free mind which for nearly five centuries had been a vital part of the moral being, the spiritual substance, and the beauty of France. This kind of independent spirit is symbolized for Thibaudet in another writer,

<sup>6</sup> Albert Thibaudet, *N.R.F.*, CLXXX (1928), p. 402.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, CCXXIX (1932), p. 524.

Stendhal,<sup>8</sup> and in a reference to this author's work, he states the exact opposite of the doctrine expressed in Bourget's preface. Declaring that, when dealing with works of art, it is a dangerous and corruptive habit to make of primary importance the ideas which these works of art represent, he calls Stendhal's idea of *virtu* "une idée d'artiste, une idée qui n'a jamais déterminé le moindre crime, mais qui a engendré chez des gens fort paisibles comme vous et moi tels et tels sentiments artistiques, dont nous n'avons tiré ni notre morale, ni une morale."<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, concerning scientific and philosophic theories, he reiterates his conviction that a country which is sound can submit to foreign influences without losing its identity and argues that, whereas a product may be taxed because it is not French, ideas, if they are to be kept alive, must be subject to other laws: "Elles vivent sur cette idée, incontestablement justifiée par l'histoire, que jusqu'ici les vérités scientifiques et les grandes doctrines philosophiques ont été trouvées par des hommes de nations très différentes, et qu'il en sera probablement demain."<sup>10</sup> Finally, any attempt to export French ideas as being superior will merely, in Thibaudet's opinion, turn the rest of the world against France and give her in the eyes of the world "une figure injurieuse et difficile de cousine Bette."<sup>11</sup> Speaking, for example, in 1933, of a certain attachment to the eighteenth-century tradition, which has its value, he admits, and a perspective of which any French civilization must retain, he nevertheless warns: "Le procopisme n'est pas plus la mesure de la France que le tortonisme n'est la mesure de Paris. Prétendre en faire la mesure de l'Europe paraîtra encore plus excessif."<sup>12</sup>

Thibaudet died in 1936, deploring the waning interest in the League of Nations. Holding no brief for totalitarianism of any kind but firmly convinced that intellectual controls made in the name of democracy would eventually destroy democracy itself, Thibaudet saw in the League of Nations the only place where the conflicting philosophies of the world could meet and strive for that understanding which alone will insure the progress of mankind. After the Hitler elections in 1933, he warns in one of his essays of the possibility of ideological wars comparable to the religious wars of the sixteenth century.<sup>13</sup> A year later, lamenting the lack of attention given to the League in a plan for the creation of a French National Office of Publicity, he writes: "Il ne faut pas le dire gaiement. La marque la plus noire et la plus désespérante de ces années 1933 et 1934, c'est sans doute la fin où la mise en sommeil d'une mystique européenne, portée dix ans par une euphorie, et qui a sombré dans la misère économique."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, LXXVI (1920), pp. 132-33.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, XCV (1921), pp. 192-93.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, CVIII (1922), p. 332.

<sup>11</sup> Albert Thibaudet, CXVIII (1923), pp. 87-88.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, CCXXXVI (1933), p. 820.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, CCXLII (1933), p. 728.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, CCLII (1934), p. 430.

Four years after Thibaudet's death, France bowed her head in another humiliating defeat, an unexpectedly sudden capitulation to the proponents of a foreign ideology. Long before others became aware or concerned, Thibaudet had seen the lengthening shadow of totalitarianism, but never did he succumb to the idea that the safety of France or the world lay in enforced "right thinking." True humanist in his benevolence toward and tolerance of all humanity, he put his faith in an ever-expanding circle of understanding. What he wrote after World War I, he continued to emphasize the remainder of his life.

L'histoire politique, intellectuelle et morale . . . c'est, en même temps qu'une lutte, un dialogue . . . un dialogue que nous devons chercher à élargir. Et je sais bien que cela a ses limites, et que la planète . . . n'est pas un jardin d'Academus. C'est une multiplicité de carrefours où nous sommes toujours entre la guerre et la paix, et où "ne pas chercher à comprendre" marque toujours la direction de la guerre. Comprendre les choses, mais aussi comprendre les hommes, comprendre les nations. Thucydide était une admirable lecture de guerre; Platon ferait une de nos meilleurs lectures d'après-guerre.<sup>15</sup>

Thibaudet believed also that a successful federation of nations would be brought about, not so much by the initiative of statesmen, as by the successors of the *philosophes* of the eighteenth century, and he stated this to André Maurois and other writers who were at Geneva in 1931.<sup>16</sup> Those of us who are in the Humanities may in a sense consider ourselves another line of descendants and give serious consideration to what we may contribute toward education for democracy, not through intellectual controls, but through a furthering of world understanding. We have already been reproved for our betrayal of genuinely liberal education insofar as we have succumbed to the lure of the scientific method and reduced to a secondary level those elements which should be of primary importance. More specifically, those of us in languages have been accused of forgetting that the most valid argument for the study of languages is that they allow us to enter into the lives of other peoples and to understand them through their own means of expression. Whatever other groups may feel called upon to do in the name of expediency, perhaps the example of this internationally-minded colleague may serve to remind us that the mere mimicking of phrases is by no means a preparation for democratic living and that to capitulate as some have suggested to the ghost of a Third World War and gear our language teaching to that end is to adopt the temporal approach and deny the essential meaning of the word *Humanities*.

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, CIX (1922), p. 452.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, CCXVI (1931), p. 462.

## *How to Study French*

ARTICLES to the right, articles to the left, articles in back numbers and in those that are yet to be turned off the press! But, for the most part, all treat one of the following phases of the subject under consideration: (1) the importance of learning a foreign language; (2) the failure of language departments "to sell their goods"; (3) the wonderful discoveries made by the Army Specialized Training Program; (4) how to teach foreign languages functionally or non-functionally. What is noticeably lacking is an article on "How to Study a Foreign Language." Information touching the four above enumerated topics is of not too much interest to the language departments in which I have taught, since in all three colleges I have used the Multiple Approach Method.

With 20 years of experience in language teaching in both high schools and college I have found that the student presents a much more difficult problem than the language. There are his preconceived prejudices, his aversion to mental labor and his "I-can'tism" to be broken down, and his self-confidence and determination to succeed to be built up. Hence the first teacher, the pioneer who introduces the young cadet into the realm of language study, balances the degree of success on his management of the student rather than on his presentation of the subject matter. Certain mind sets, attitudes, desires and gratifications must be established during the first semester of language study as well as certain elementary rules of grammar and a sufficiently large fundamental vocabulary, both of which are intimately bound up with correct pronunciation. My greatest challenge, then, as each September finds me with a new group of college freshmen is to make my students like French in spite of themselves and to get across to them that energy and effort invested in the learning of French bring intellectual returns from day to day. This involves a daily orientation on the HOW of studying French.

These remarks are geared toward the teaching of French through the Multiple Approach Method of Dr. Emil B. de Sauzé, whose Cleveland Plan has been before the public eye for more than a quarter of a century. This scientific, functional method, which seeks to develop the student simultaneously in the four channels of communication,—understanding, speaking, reading, writing,—was actually the basis for the A.S.T. Program during the war years. Dr. de Sauzé's text, "Cours Pratique," can be found throughout the country in army, navy and air training schools as well as in elementary, high school and college classes. The motivating spirit of the method is that of its master, *pleasure in learning*. But to Dr. de Sauzé and

his followers "pleasure" does not insinuate sugar-coated doses of adulterated facts. Nor do they advance the slogan, "learn to speak in French in six easy lessons." Boiled down, it is the old-fashioned idea of finding pleasure in mental work that the teacher will endeavor to sell her student buyers.

How, then, should one study French in order to get the best returns? The honest language teacher has nothing to offer the beginner but a slow, rocky road banked on one side by precipitous depths of discouragement, wherein once fallen, he will naturally be inclined to remain prostrate, and on the other by blind alleys of mediocre achievement where he will be content to loiter without continuing to the end of the journey—**mastery**. To lead a student through the labyrinthine ways of oral, aural and written French two qualities are required of the teacher and two are recommended for the student.

For her part the teacher should be fired with inexhaustible enthusiasm for the "little done well." She can profitably subscribe to the "doughnut philosophy" according to which she receives more joy from the dough encircling the hole than sadness at the emptiness of the hole. No matter how slowly the students grow in their language knowledge from day to day, the teacher's attitude should still be one of gratitude for growth and not of lamentations over what was left unmastered. This professional enthusiasm will be fueled only by infinite patience and considerate understanding of the mental equipment of each of her charges. Every teacher enjoys forging ahead with the above-average student. But there is a keener pleasure awaiting the genuine teacher who slackens up to let the puffing rearguard catch up a pace or two. High school and college teachers, it must be remembered, do not have the army and navy privilege of screening off untalented students.

Humility and perseverance are the two qualities recommended to the student who would make the upward grade to the land of language mastery. Humility? Yes. A language student can not get on without this attitude of mind which makes him conscious of how little he knows on the subject, conscious that he is going through the process of learning, conscious of the fact that he has every right to make mistakes. Furthermore he should be made to realize that mistakes at this stage of the learning process are stepping-stones to progress.

To learn to speak a language the student must turn back the hands of time somewhat and reexperience what he lived through when learning to speak his native language. In the case of high school and college students their very ability to think and reason will offer them more difficulties than they had when learning the native tongue during the bilingual period of childhood. Thus the process of putting words together will be slow. The word the student wants at a particular place will generally be like General Sherman, "a hundred miles away." He will think in English, which pro-



cedure will more often give him English in French dress rather than genuine French. He will be loathe to accept the fundamental law that beginners must say "what they know how to say" and not "what they want to say." His ears will be wooden as far as euphony and correct pronunciation are concerned. Because of all these contrary winds the first six months of exposure to the language will bring daily correction in grammatical constructions, in choice of words, in pronunciation, even in his lack of facial gymnastics. "That's the last straw," he is apt to say, "I have to change even the contour of my face to speak French." And he is right, if he happens to be a lip-lazy American who does not open his mouth. Pronunciation exercises before a mirror are a sure cure for facial paralysis in French speech as well as any thoughts on personal beauty.

This is the rôle humility plays in the mastery of a language. Only those who have this quality can get past the first sentence in their daily recitation; only those who have it are brave enough to try more difficult constructions, more idiomatic expressions; only those who have it venture forth into the perilous waters of raising questions; only those who have it may ever hope to climb to the self-remunerating heights of mastery of a foreign language.

Humility, day in and day out, will naturally be supported by patient perseverance which is another word for "sticktuitiveness." Otherwise, how many good sentences will die before the verb arrives! How many worthwhile ideas will forever remain secrets! The student who shrinks before the labor of formulating a sentence in a foreign tongue fails to persevere because he lacks humility. These two qualities of mind go hand in hand and are prerequisites for success in learning French according to the Multiple Approach Method.

Encouragement on the part of the teacher will serve the twofold purpose of smoothing the jagged edge from repeated correction and of bait for continued effort.

As for more tangible HOWS in this "how to study program," the following suggestions may be of benefit to the learner:

#### A. *Pronunciation*

1. He should speak clearly and distinctly whatever he says. Fear of mispronouncing too often produces an inaudible sound which has far more exasperating results than a definitely heard fault.
2. When reading or studying alone it is a good practice to say the French words loud enough to hear them. A word and its correct pronunciation become a part of the individual only after 20 repetitions. The sound of a word cannot strike against the ear drum too often.
3. He should build up a feeling of pride in the acquisition of a good pronunciation. "A-something-like-this" stabs bespeaks slovenly learning habits and advertises second rate goods.
4. The use of mirrors for pure pronunciation exercises are of much value for the correct placement of tongue, mouth movement, and muscle control.



**B. Vocabulary:**

1. There is no streamlined, carpeted road to vocabulary building. It is the old-fashioned way of memory and drill. But this drill does not mean the outmoded one-word vocabulary match. It is rather a building up of phrases and sentences to give complete thoughts with each use instead of disconnected words presenting no real idea. This is the easiest way to arrive at that state of intellectual bliss in which one thinks in the foreign language. This drill and memory work will be more effective when supported by frequent use in and out of class. To confine spoken French to the fifty minute class period is to stunt one's growth in the intellectual field.
2. The gain is entirely personal when one's active vocabulary grows through usage. Naturally the passive vocabulary will grow apace.
3. Whereas the dictionary is not too frequent a reference in elementary classes, the students cannot learn too early in their language explorations that the first word listed in the dictionary is most often not the one they are looking for.

**C. Grammar:**

1. Of beginners it is wise to exact the memorization of the fundamental rules of grammar. These rules drawn up in simple yet correct French offer indispensable tools for class discussion and questioning. This is memorization of grammar for conversation's sake and it is a tremendous aid to learning to think in the language. Furthermore, the constant repetition of these elementary rules carves grooves of French thought in the mind.

**D. Composition:**

1. Original compositions and five and ten minute paragraph writing are excellent helps in this thinking-in-French campaign. A good practice is to place a question at the board several times a week. It need not be on the lesson. It is preferable to have a question that will challenge them to reconstruct their vocabulary and use it in different patterns from those they are accustomed to use. In such exercises of an impromptu nature the student will find use for the many idiomatic expressions stored away in memory; he will learn to feel the turn of a French sentence; and he will recognize the value of increasing his vocabulary through private reading.

What return can the teacher offer the student for this labor and mind-scourging? The satisfaction of having accomplished a good work and mere joy of achievement; and secondly, the power of mastery of the language at elementary level. He will have learned to play two types of melodies upon the most delicate of instruments, the human voice. His mind will have carved two patterns of thought through whose English and French channels he may communicate ideas. Are not such intellectual pleasures worth cleft pride and cleft time?

SISTER M. LELIA, S.S.N.D.

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## *The Editor's Corner*

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### WHEN SHALL WE COME TOGETHER?

I wonder which way the language teaching profession is moving? Are there any definite goals ahead? Do we know where we are going? Are we sure where we want to go, or are we trying to ascertain which way certain groups are moving before we decide to come out and proclaim our intentions?

I remember distinctly the system in vogue when as a youth I was called upon to teach in College. I immediately made the discovery that I had to follow the system in vogue in order to attempt to teach the students to try to imitate me in handling a foreign language the way I did.

Since I was going to teach Spanish, I was instructed to see the professor of French for advice and guidance. He was familiar with three of the half dozen or so Spanish readers out at the time, and I was told to use these readers and ask my students to translate from them. Although my students were older than I, we got along remarkably well, due, no doubt, to the happy coincidence that I was a good boxer, and since I boxed with them, it gave me standing and prestige among them. They were willing to give me a chance to teach them.

As the method in vogue did not call for any speaking, and as there was not any in the French and German courses, I did not pay any attention to the oral part of our work. Nor did the students miss it very much, since no one surmised that oral work might be part of language teaching in College.

Soon after, partly because I was one of a few native teachers able to handle college classes, I came to Michigan. I found a different system in force, that is, I found a system.

Professor Charles P. Wagner was guiding the destinies of the Spanish teaching in Michigan. He had prepared a grammar remarkable for its clarity and simplicity which gave considerable emphasis to the spoken language. Not only this, but Professor Wagner had organized the work in such a way that the spoken language was to be given ample time and attention. Courses in conversation sprang up, and the courses in literature grew larger and prospered. I don't doubt there were other leading institutions where a comparable development was taking place. Language teaching was in a prosperous condition. So much so, that the suspicions of the educationists were aroused.

It was inevitable that some language should draw more students than others. We made the mistake of starting to extol the language in which we were most interested, without much regard for the other languages. We did our extolling with the devilish ingenuity of people well informed about the subject we were championing, knowing the weak and strong points of the rival languages, but recalling only the weak ones. It was easy for those opposed to language work in any shape or form to attack us. We were divided and we were supplying them with ammunition.

If language teaching did not suffer any more than it did, it was because chang-

ing conditions in the world were helping it along. Scientific development was making the world smaller and it was beginning to dawn upon the people of this country that the practical value of language study was considerable. The last War brought this up with dramatic suddenness. The Government became interested in a big way, and the opposition went underground. Indeed, we found champions in the least expected places, champions who must be considered sincere enough, since they were willing to be quoted.

And we made great plans, and we talked and talked, and we were sure the battle had been won. We were so sure of victory that we began to scramble over methods and systems, and what not? We knew what the people wanted and what they were willing to support, and we knew we could get concessions all along the line. But those of us who had given lukewarm support to the changing attitude would rather oppose it than to try to channel it along desirable lines, and we are now scrambling again while our antagonists watch from outside with glee. When will we come together and decide what we want?

JdT.

#### WHAT FICTION SHALL WE READ IN SPANISH? ANOTHER VIEW

Professor Withers' "Editorial" in the October issue of the *MLJ* moves me to an answer, although in making it I may be accused of protecting my own interests, since it was doubtless my edition of *Pensativa* whose "primitive horrors" made his hair stand on end.

I have two objections to Professor Withers' condemnation of the use of Spanish American literature as teaching material for the early years in Spanish: the peevish immoderation with which he expresses his conclusions, and the conclusions themselves. Who are the "uninformed theorists, knowing no Spanish, but prating about the 'good neighbor' policy as if they did," who "exclude our students . . . from the fictional literature of the 'Old Country'"? Does Professor Withers imply that teachers who use Spanish American reading materials know no Spanish? If he is not talking about teachers, who else would determine the reading content of the courses? Whoever these uninformed theorists are, Professor Withers objects violently to their prejudiced rejection of Spanish literature. Contrast this with his own "informed" view of the proper procedure: "The comparative few who come through their Spanish-apprenticeship with genuine capacity in the language, and appreciation of the literature of continental Spain, may thereafter delve as much as they wish into the literary things of Mexico, Venezuela, and the others!"

The basis for Professor Withers' rejection of Spanish American literature for all but the comparative and happy few is, in his own words: "Nearly all the Spanish-American fiction I have read is too turgid for my tastes, too preoccupied with violence and cruelty and what appears to me a concept of cheapness of human life." I do not know whether his reading in Spanish American literature is confined to works edited for school use. If it is, he should be familiar with such texts as Palma's *Tradiciones peruanas*, Isaacs' *María*, Altamirano's *La navidad en las montañas*, del Campo's *Fausto*, Teresa de la Parra's *Las memorias de Mamá Blanca (Blanca Nieves y Compañía)*, Güiraldes' *Don Segundo Sombra*, Alegría's *El mundo es ancho y ajeno*, and López-Portillo's *La Parcela*, none of which could reasonably be called turgid or preoccupied with violence and cruelty.

And if Professor Withers' reading extends to literature not edited for school use, what of Mallea, Pedro Prado, Barrios, Abreu Gómez, Norah Lange, María Luisa Bombal, Borges, and Lynch, to name only those that come immediately to mind?

One cannot avoid the thought that the professor's hypersensitivity to violence and realism may hamper him considerably in selecting appropriate reading material for students of college age who may have come to know and value these qualities in contemporary English and American literature, and perhaps even in Greek and Elizabethan drama.

A final objection to Professor Withers' remarks is that he opposes Spanish to Spanish American literature, English to American literature, assuming that if one is to be read, the other must be excluded. Surely the sane procedure, in all elementary and intermediate courses, is to combine readings from European and American sources, which do not oppose but rather complement each other, and, for Spanish majors, to insist on a survey course in both fields before specialization in either. I recommend to Professor Withers the reading of "Enfoques: De España a la América Hispana," a paper read at the California meeting of the AATSP and published in the November, 1949, issue of *Hispania*, in which Professor Carlos García-Prada of the University of Washington makes a clear and eloquent statement of the interdependence of Spanish and Spanish American literature.

DONALD D. WALSH

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To the Editor of *MLJ*:

*A Long Brewing, Finally Fermented Comment on the  
Kaulffers Method of Language Teaching*

There may be something to be said for the intelligence of the student of Spanish who will risk jumping at the conclusion that *geografía* means geography; *álgebra*, algebra; and *Italia*, Italy. But there is no more to be said for the student who knows that *disgustado* does not mean disgusted, nor *desgraciado*, disgraced, nor *constipado*, constipated; who buying a ticket in Buenos Aires in 1949 for a movie announced in lights on the marquee as *Leven Anclas*, knows that he is not going to see Eleven Ankles but something he saw two years ago in the States as *Anchors Aweigh*.

True cognates help and many of our static-minded pupils need prodding to jump at the most obvious conclusions, like a frog titillated where its tail used to be. But the students should be warned that there is such a thing as overindulgence which, like any vice, may become productive of more harm than good.

FRANK W. MORTON

Head of the Foreign Language Dept.

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JUAN CENTENO OF MIDDLEBURY

Juan Centeno gave the greater part of his active teaching life to Middlebury College. In good health or ailing, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to that great

language institution where he was held in the highest esteem. He died, still a young man, the 19th of June, 1949. Language studies have lost an inspired teacher and an active leader. We join in the sorrow of his passing.

We are publishing a tribute to Juan Centeno's memory prepared by one of his best friends—

Juan Centeno nació en Ronda, el 13 de Abril de 1904. Tuvo la desgracia de perder a su madre, Doña Salud Riloba, y su padre, ilustre abogado, hubo de abandonar Andalucía y fijar su residencia en Madrid, desde donde le era más fácil atender a sus múltiples quehaceres. En Madrid, Juan Centeno se recibió de Bachiller el año 1920. Estudiando el bachillerato, comienza su afición por la música, el arte y en especial la literatura. Su deseo hubiera sido seguir la carrera de Filosofía y Letras, pero la tradición familiar le impuso la de Medicina. Después de estudiar en varias universidades, se doctoró en Madrid el año 1927. Dos personas le ayudan con cariño, su tío Don Luis Centeno, médico de Ronda, y Don Fernando de los Ríos, con quien convive en Granada.

A pesar de todo el esfuerzo que requería el estudio de la Medicina, siempre encontró tiempo para seguir seriamente en contacto con la literatura. No fué, sin embargo, la persistencia de sus aficiones literarias lo que le hizo cambiar de dirección. Apenas empezó a ejercer, el lado económico de su profesión le alejó de la práctica de la medicina. Llevado por una razón moral, bien o mal fundada, renuncia a su carrera y viene a los Estados Unidos. Quizás éste es el rasgo más destacado de la personalidad de Juan Centeno: su fuerza de carácter; dentro de la mayor tolerancia, su gran firmeza moral, su innata honradez.

En Estados Unidos estudia en diferentes universidades, se familiariza con la enseñanza y la vida de este país. Fué instructor de español en las Universidades de Oregon y de Syracuse, y, desde 1931, es llamado a Middlebury College, donde, primero bajo la dirección del Sr. Gil y Gaya, y después como Decano y Director está a cargo de la Escuela Española. Se casó en 1929, de su matrimonio tuvo una niña. Hacía tiempo había caído enfermo. Juan Centeno murió el 19 de Junio de 1949.

En pleno goce de su salud y enfermo, vivió constantemente y por entero dedicado a la Escuela. La Escuela era para él algo más que la enseñanza del español y de la civilización y las literaturas hispánicas. Estudiantes, profesores, cursos, programas, a todo eso le concedía la mayor atención. Era muy exigente con el trabajo, tanto de estudiantes como de profesores; le preocupaba establecer un equilibrio entre la enseñanza práctica—pronunciación, conversación—y el estudio de las grandes literaturas y de la historia de la cultura; pero esto era únicamente el comienzo de su cuidado. Lo que quería era hacer de la Escuela un centro espiritual y profunda y esencialmente humano.

Hasta el punto que es posible realizar un ideal, se puede afirmar que Juan Centeno consiguió lo que se proponía. Su inteligencia, su integridad y su bondad le ganaron el cariño y el respeto de cuantos le conocieron. En Catherine Centeno encontró la mayor devoción para sus ideales.

Quiso rodear su obra de modestia y de silencio, lo cual no hará que se olvide su nombre. La Escuela, sus amigos, sabemos lo que hemos perdido. Recoger su labor, continuarla, será la mejor manera de recordarle.

JOAQUÍN CASALDUERO

*New York University, October 8, 1949*

# Notes and News

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## Coronet Instructional Films

With the collaboration of Dr. Henry Grattan Doyle, CORONET Instructional Films of Chicago has issued a film, *Why Study Foreign Languages?* meant to impress young students with the need for the study of foreign languages.

*Why Study Foreign Languages?* may be used in educational guidance work, giving a background of information and helping to develop attitudes for intelligent selection of high school courses. It may be used in classes which are studying a foreign language to motivate study. It should be used in home rooms and in assemblies to establish general attitudes toward education and toward foreign language study in particular. Adult groups of all kinds will enjoy the film and gain more informed appreciation for the language instruction in their schools.

## Belgium in Kansas City

The Belgian government has opened a trade exhibit center in Kansas City. The purpose is to acquaint the merchants and the buying public of the Middle West with the particular goods Belgium has to offer on the American market, in order to earn the dollars she needs to pay for our wheat and similar imports from the United States. What is seemingly unique about the Belgian project is that it represents an attempt to bring international trade down to the grass roots.

## Recordings of Goethe Convocation at Aspen, Colorado

Sound Chicago Recording Company announces recordings of the complete proceedings of the international Goethe Convocation and Music Festival, which are available in popular priced albums. Sound Chicago recorded 106 hours of lectures on 763,200 feet of magnetic tape and wire. Plastic discs were made from the master magnetic recordings, and are now available to the general public, libraries, museums, and educational and cultural institutions and organizations.

## Ancient Troy

Early in 1950 Princeton University Press will publish for the University of Cincinnati a monumental series of archeological volumes reporting the finds made in the excavation of Ancient Troy. The excavation, most extensive since the discovery of the site by the German archeologist, Heinrich Schliemann, eighty years ago, was conducted by the University of Cincinnati between 1932 and 1938 under the direction of Professor Carl Blegen.

## Summer School in Saltillo, Mexico

La Escuela Interamericana de Verano of Saltillo, Coahuila, Mexico, will hold its seventh sessions in 1950. This year there are to be two separate sessions: one from July 3 to August 11, for students, teachers, and others who wish to spend their vacation in Mexico and at the same time attend school. The second session from November 13 to December 22. This will eliminate a lapse of a year between sessions, and give those who wish to continue with their Spanish an opportunity to do so. Both sessions are G.I. Approved.



Work on a Master of Arts Degree in Spanish, with a minor in Mexican Civilization, is offered. Conversation continues to be the major emphasis, with three hours daily given by means of private tutors. The Commercial Department is being enlarged, and Certificates of Proficiency are given to students who major in Commercial Work. The Commercial Department is now a member of the American Association of Commercial Colleges. The entire school is a part of the Section of University Studies of the Mexican Public Education Department.

### *Fulbright Fellowships*

More than 500 American graduate students representing nearly every field of study have received U. S. Government awards for the current academic year and are now studying abroad. These fellowships have been granted under the program of educational exchange established under Public Law 584 (the Fulbright Act.)

The Institute of International Education, 2 West 45th Street, New York, which is the agency charged with the conduct of competitions for the pre-doctoral awards under this program, is very interested in achieving as wide representation of many disciplines as possible. Qualified students present enrolled should be encouraged to become acquainted with the objectives of the Fulbright Act.

### *Inter-American Cultural Fellowships*

The United States Office of Education, in cooperation with the Department of State, announces the availability of fellowships to United States graduate students as provided under the Convention for the Promotion of Inter-American Cultural Relations.

Two graduate students are exchanged each year between the United States and each of the republics signatory to the Convention. The participating countries, other than the United States, are as follows: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. During the next academic year, the following countries probably will receive students from the United States: Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. Applications must be received by the Office of Education not later than February 15, 1950.

### *Esso International Fellowships*

The Institute of International Education in New York has announced four Esso International Fellowships established by the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey. These fellowships, which are to be administered by the Institute, provide opportunities for foreign graduate students to do advanced work in engineering, science, economics, and related subjects in American universities.

These fellowships are meant to increase technical proficiency abroad, and, at the same time, to give promising foreign nationals a chance to see how America lives, so that the United States may be better understood abroad. One of the features of the plan, apart from the year of graduate study, is a travel allowance which makes possible field trips to various parts of the United States, so that the visitors may see a cross section of the country.

### *Dr. Kenneth Holland, President of the IIE*

Dr. Kenneth Holland, United States Counselor on UNESCO Affairs in Paris, has been elected President of the Institute of International Education. Because of previous commitments, Dr. Holland will not be able to assume the Presidency of the Institute until next spring, following the general meeting of UNESCO in Florence, Italy. In the meantime, Dr. Donald J. Shank, Vice-President of the Institute, will continue to serve as Acting Director.

### *The National French Contest of the AATF*

The National French Contest, sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French, will be given during the week of April 17-22, 1950. The contest is open to all students of French in public, private, and parochial secondary schools. A standard, printed, objective examination is given to students in five divisions: first, second, third, and fourth year of French, and special.

A medal of honor is awarded to the outstanding student of French in each school participating in the contest. Additional prizes, including medals given by the French government, college scholarships, books, records, and newspaper subscriptions are awarded at the state, regional, and national levels. The contest is approved by the National Association of Secondary-School Principals.

Further information concerning the contest may be obtained by addressing: James W. Glennen, National Chairman, University of Akron, Akron, Ohio.

### *Ernst Erich Noth, Associate Editor of "Books Abroad"*

Ernst Erich Noth, internationally known author and lecturer, has joined the faculty of the University of Oklahoma, as associate professor of modern languages and associate editor of *Books Abroad*.

Professor Noth's name has been associated with literary groups throughout Europe and America. He has lectured extensively both in France and the United States, and he has been a regular contributor to leading publications in Germany, France, and the United States.

### *Hebrew in New York Schools*

From Dr. Theodore Huebbener, the ever active Director of Foreign Languages of New York City, we have been able to secure the following information about the progress of the Hebrew language in New York City.

Although Hebrew has been taught in New York City less than two decades, its enrollment is now over 5,000. This places it fifth among the modern languages. Since last term it gained 1074 or 27%, it has had the largest percentual gain of any language.

At present, Hebrew is offered in 19 senior high schools, the largest enrollment (567) being at Thomas Jefferson. It is also taught in five junior high schools and two evening schools.

## Reviews

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AGARD, FREDERICK B., AND DUNKEL, HAROLD B., *An Investigation of Second-Language Teaching*. Ginn and Company, New York, 1948, pp. vii+344. Price \$7.20 (for two volumes).

DUNKEL, HAROLD B., *Second-Language Learning*. Ginn and Company, New York, 1948, pp. vi+218. Price, \$7.20 (for two volumes).

The Agard-Dunkel volumes are the most important pronouncement on foreign language teaching and learning since the "Coleman Report" of nearly two decades ago. Aided by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, the authors set out several years back to formulate a program for testing the results of foreign language teaching in certain cooperating institutions, both at college and at secondary level. For the measurement of the student's vocabulary, reading, and grammar, they used the Cooperative Tests already well known to the profession; for the measurement of aural skill they employed a test of their own devising. (To estimate oral skill they fabricated a test which by their own statement offers results too unsatisfactory for serious consideration.) Over a period of two years the tests were administered to students of French, German, Russian, and Spanish in a total of fifty-six colleges or universities and forty-four secondary schools. The results are tabulated in the first of their two volumes.

The authors willingly admit that their testing was carried out under less than perfect conditions, and that, as a consequence, the results are less than a perfect measurement of what they were trying to measure. In an objective fairness which their readers will greatly appreciate, the authors detail the weaknesses of their program and its failure to achieve completely reliable results. But they insist—and in this the fair-minded reader will support them—that their efforts do afford, and for the first time, a reasonably reliable and an objective measurement of the oral-auralist claim, as made by certain proponents of the method, that not only should the oral-aural approach enable the student in two or three years to speak and to understand the spoken language with the approximation of a native's ability to do so, but that the reading power more or less automatically follows without any special effort on the teacher's part to build that power.

As a result of their tests, Agard and Dunkel assert (I, 289) that "by and large, experimental students (that is, those taught by the "new" oral-aural method) failed to understand the phonographically recorded utterances of an unfamiliar native speaker, delivering unfamiliar though easy material, significantly better than did conventional students (those taught by the "reading" method). It is true that the causes of this similarity of performance were seemingly different for the two types of course. While conventional students lacked aural ability because they had not been taught it, experimental students failed of higher attainment in part because the limits of their comprehension experience (particularly in terms of known vocabulary) were those of their textual materials and were much narrower than those within which the tests were designed to measure aural competence. With due allowance made also for the shortcomings of the tests, the fact remains that most experimental students did not give evidence of approaching native aural ability." They continue (p. 290): "In general . . . the experimental groups did not demonstrate so high a level of reading proficiency at the end of their first or second year as did conventional students. In a number of cases the results were significantly poorer. There appear to have been two chief reasons for this outcome: (1) in many

programs so much time was devoted to the initial oral-aural objective that much less reading was done than in conventional courses; (2) as some programs were organized, the responsibility for teaching reading devolved upon drill instructors who were unequipped to deal with the very different problems of developing reading ability . . . .” They go on to point out that as measured by the Cooperative Tests, the vocabulary of the experimental students was smaller than that of the conventional groups, but that in grammar the experimental students “generally tended to be as successful as conventional groups.”

As for the tests’ vindication of the assumptions which, the authors assert, underlay the experimental courses (viz., p. 291 “that oral-aural proficiency is the best gateway to reading ability,” and “that students are highly motivated to study a language via the oral-aural approach”), they state that “superior reading skills were developed in those programs where reading received the greatest time and emphasis. The highest levels were reached in reading-method courses which featured moderate amounts of classroom oral-aural practice directly related to the material read. On the other hand, experimental students whose oral-aural command was limited to the scope of their spoken-language text books were observed to be unable either to understand reading material presented to them *viva voce*, or to discuss in the language the content of their readings.

“As to the assumption made in some quarters that oral-aural competence *automatically* creates reading ability and that consequently the latter need not be specifically taught, there is evidence *per contra* so far as the experiments observed are concerned. . . . Low correlations of reading and aural test results, from both experimental and conventional programs, furnish conclusive evidence that (at least at sub-native levels of competence) oral-aural and reading proficiency constitute separate, independent skills which do not develop one from the other but rather only from direct training in each separately.” In regard to the superior motivation afforded by the oral-aural method, the authors report their inability to find it; the persistent drill necessary to the method soon becomes so monotonous that, they assert, the student rather early is attacked by a boredom that results in relatively inferior accomplishment.

The authors conclude Volume one by suggesting that improvements in technique may yet render the oral-aural method workable within the time limits imposed by the usual curriculum in high school and college and within a scope of student accomplishment, somewhat less than the native-like ability dreamed of by some oral-auralists. They insist that oral-aural teachers must define their objectives much more specifically and must refine their texts and tests to that end. They question whether we should try at all to impart linguistic skills to the lower half of our classes as at present constituted; this lower half, by the authors’ tests, showed such a small accomplishment that as far as actual linguistic skill went, it was insignificant. (The authors do not approach the question whether values other than linguistic skills are achievable by this group.)

Volume two of the two-volume work was written by Mr. Dunkel without Mr. Agard’s co-authorship. It leads naturally out of the questions raised by Volume one. It proposes the bases for a psychologically sound program of foreign language instruction. But Volume two is no blueprint for a ready-made foreign language program; to the contrary, its value depends on the fact that Mr. Dunkel, in our present state of ignorance of the psychology of learning a foreign language, is unable, as is anyone else in all truth, to devise a program that is in all ways assuredly sound. Dunkel reviews the field of psychology as it pertains to language learning, points out what we must know in order to afford the best conditions of learning for the learner and then offers his plea for a psychologically sound program by urging the profession to take steps to discover what we need to know in order that an adequate program may be formulated. Dunkel’s volume is reasonably objective and his statements appeal to the reader as being fair and impartial. When he argues, for example, that most of our present programs are chaotic and ineffective because we do not know exactly what we are trying to do, or that we aim at

goals beyond student capacity for achieving them, it is difficult to disagree with him. He is properly caustic in his Chapter I when he discusses the present state of the study of language learning. He gives valuable data on the fundamental psychology of the language learning of the child in his Chapter II, even though he agrees that not too much is known about the subject. He offers significant information on those factors that are important in language learning: the student's intelligence and background, his previous linguistic skills and experience, his motivation. He insists on our defining just what we are trying to do in our language classes, and he finally reminds us again (p. 161), in keeping with what he had made clear before, that although the psychologist has been looked up to by the language teacher, as a source of knowledge of the best way to teach languages, in reality the psychologist has largely let us down in our expectations. For "the psychologist has discovered complexities and complications which suggest that the language teacher will probably gain as much from experimentation with his own material as he will gain from the psychological findings." It is up to the foreign language teacher, then—if Dunkel is right—to devise his own way of finding out how best to teach his subject, but he must, inevitably, have the aid of trained psychologists in the matter of controlling the variables which so often in the past have made worthless those experiments aimed at discovering the elements of efficient teaching technique. Specifically, and to use only one example, we need more and better tests; tests that may be used by many teachers in many institutions as a check on what each is actually accomplishing.

To conclude his volume, Dunkel appends a set of resolutions adopted at the Chicago Language Conference of September, 1948. Thirty-three linguists had met to consider the first three chapters of Volume one of the Agard-Dunkel opus, and to criticise them. After a two-day discussion the group drew up the resolutions, the main feature of which is a recommendation that two bodies be constituted to carry on the work begun by the Agard-Dunkel investigation. (P. 193) "The first of these bodies should be a small committee, similar to the Investigation and supported by a grant from some foundation, charged with experimentation and research for at least a three-year, or better, a five-year period, on a few specific projects. . . . It is recommended that this small committee secure the collaboration of experts from other fields: psychology, speech and hearing, English reading, music, dramatics, linguistic sciences, etc. to serve in an advisory capacity.

"The second of these bodies should be a committee charged with the long-range, over-all coordination and supervision of research and experimentation in the whole field of language teaching. It may be hoped that such a committee could readily be formed through the collaboration of interlocking committees of the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Council on Education, the National Research Council, the Social Science Research Council, through the Conference Board of Associated Research Councils."

The resolutions then name the most urgent projects suitable for immediate experimentation and early implementation in actual teaching practice by the first-named of the two committees. Among them (pp. 194-195) are the choice of suitable materials for teaching, both in reading and oral-aural practice, the objective determination of the number of hours per week the student needs for most efficient learning, the devising of a way to bridge the gap between the oral-aural approach and the usual reading material, etc., etc. The second of the two committees should "undertake to plan a whole comprehensive survey of the psychological and practical factors in language study;" there is not sufficient space here to detail the topics proposed for inclusion in the survey (pp. 195-196).

The Agard-Dunkel volumes will cause much comment for some years to come. One might hope that the comment may achieve a higher level of fair and objective impartiality than some of that which followed the "Coleman Report."

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LUCKYJ, GEORGE AND RUDNYCKYJ, JAROSLAV, *A Modern Ukrainian Grammar*. The University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1949.

This lithoprinted grammar marks a great advance over previous elementary books in Ukrainian. For the first time there has appeared, thanks to the support of the Humanities Research Council of Canada, a Ukrainian grammar in a style comparable to grammars in other European languages. For the most part the explanations are fairly clear and satisfactory, although the student will at times be bewildered by the apparent arbitrary character of some of the rules. This, however, is to be explained by the difficulties of making certain developments which are clear to the philologist intelligible to the beginner who is interested in the language of the present and does not have a detailed knowledge of Church Slavic and the older forms of Ukrainian in which Church Slavic played a more important part.

The greatest weakness is in the treatment of the verb and again this is largely due to a desire for brevity and the avoidance of unnecessary detail. Thus the student does not get a clear picture of the relations between the infinitive and the second person singular of the present or the future, and also of the means of forming the perfective and imperfective aspects.

It is still more to be regretted that the exercises for translation into English gradually disappear from the lessons and that the Ukrainian passages are merely extracts (well chosen) of masterpieces of Ukrainian literature and not always adapted for students. In the same way the omission of an English-Ukrainian vocabulary and the failure to give both the perfectives and imperfectives of Ukrainian verbs in the Ukrainian-English vocabulary will handicap decidedly the non-Ukrainian student for whom the book is apparently intended.

These, however, are relatively minor defects. The great asset of the book is the fact that it does give a good description of the modern Ukrainian, something that has long been needed, with the growing number of Ukrainians who are in contact with the English-speaking world, and we can thank the authors and the sponsors for it.

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SEWARD, ROBERT D., *Dictionary of French Deceptive Cognates*. S. F. Vanni, New York, 1947. Pp. 227.

"He believed that he had actually committed the murder": "Il croyait qu'il avait *actuellement* commis le meurtre."—"Il fallait la *prévenir*": "She had to be *prevented*." All teachers of French (in English speaking countries, that is) are familiar with translations like the above, and worse. Similar transpositions from one language to another, due to ignorance or mental indolence, account also for many an absurdity in translated literature. Yet, on looking over Professor Seward's *Dictionary of French Cognates*, one asks: Are there really so many of those pitfalls? Random checking proves to the reader that the 3,000 odd words listed are such as deserve a warning flag lest they be semantically identified with their English cognates, as this would involve either "a complete misconception or merely a poor choice amongst a number of near-synonyms." (Foreword, p. 8). True, not all of the items are cognates, as the author himself admits; one might question his including some, e.g., *haut* 'high,' *cochon* 'pig.' In other cases the kinship is obliterated, as in *blessé*—'to bless,' *le tri*—'the try.'

The *Dictionary of Cognates* has an entirely practical objective, being intended "partly as a suggestion to the makers of notes and vocabularies for classroom texts," so that the teacher may "develop in the student a wariness of using cognates as 'translations,' even though the deceptive cases are probably under ten percent of the number of 'good' cognates." (Foreword). The choice of words, the author goes on to say, was determined by "what . . . the reader of good modern prose is likely to find." This scope naturally precludes such cognates of purely historical interest as *écouter*—'to scout,' or *cueillir*—'to coil.' On the other hand, the author is



quite justified in invoking the history of the word where it is of use, e.g., in the case of *boulevard* 'bulwark.' Aptly chosen phrases illustrate the usage of the terms included.

As such, the *Dictionary of French Cognates* is one of those very useful tools that we are delighted and relieved finally to possess, thanks to tedious accumulation and sorting undertaken by an industrious and able colleague. The book is equally recommendable to teachers and students, and may prove particularly useful to those who hail from the French areas on this continent more or less strongly contaminated with English. Perusing this list we appreciate not only the great number but also the different varieties of the linguistic "faux amis." By far the most stem from Latin, French having often served as the vehicle to convey them to English, and indeed to many other Western languages. The receiving language is by no means always responsible for the semantic discrepancies of the cognates: quite a few English words have preserved old meanings, obsolete in modern French, e.g., 'to taste' synonymous with old French *taster* (hence *tâter* 'to feel of'), and 'to attend to', cf. Montaigne "un malade auquel je m'attends." A particularly deceptive class among these doublets consists in would-be French in English and vice versa: Engl. 'papier-mâché' designates what in French is called *papier-pierre*, Engl. 'encore' Fr. *bis*, and *faux pas* has in English a restricted, social signification (the two latter missing in the *Dictionary of French Cognates*). In French, *music hall* means 'vaudeville theater,' *smoking* 'tuxedo,' and *spleen* 'the blues, melancholy, ennui'!

Finally, a few remarks and suggestions. As to the arrangement, I should have preferred listing separately the English items, with references to the French section, instead of inserting them here and there without warning. To prevent the student from making *faux pas*, the argot terms and expressions might have been labelled as such.

To Fr. *commuter* (?) and *commuer* are attributed also the meanings of Engl. 'to commute': however, French for 'to commute—travel daily to and from a city' is *faire la navette*; *contrôler* is said to mean, inter alia, 'to control—to hold in check': this is rather *retenir*, *réprimer*; *cultural* "connected with agriculture", not Engl. 'cultural'; why not indicate Fr. *culturel* (as, *relations culturelles*)?; *evidence*: for Engl. 'evidence', Fr. equivalences *témoignage* and *preuve* are given, add *indice*; *profane* "profane—not sacred, secular": add 'layman—outsider, non-professional.'

I miss the following items: *délai* 'a limit of time (*dans un délai de . . .* 'within') as well as Engl. 'delay'; *demeurer* 'to stay, to live,' not 'to demur' (*hésiter, temporiser*); *humain* 'human', not 'humane' (*compassant, humanitaire*); *laïque* 'layman—secular,' not 'layman—outsider' (*profane*); *social* 'social—pertaining to human society', not 'social—pertaining to pleasure-seeking world' (*mondain*); *stupide* 'dull-witted, dolt' rather than 'stupid' (*bête*); *ventiler* 'to ventilate—cause fresh air to circulate', not 'to ventilate—discuss' (*discuter*).

Printing errors seem only reasonably numerous, beside a certain predilection for the *accent grave*. P. 56, l. 8 *embroulli* is evidently for *embrouillé*.

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BOLINGER, DWIGHT L., *Intensive Spanish*. Russell Press, Philadelphia, 1948, pp. xviii y 466. Price, \$3.50.

Tiene este libro del profesor Bolinger sus raíces metodológicas en dos ideas que para muchos son ya axiomáticas: *la gramática estudiada prácticamente es el mejor sistema para aprender un idioma extranjero; sólo se llega a poseer cumplidamente una lengua distinta de la nativa después de un esfuerzo intenso*. Ciertamente que este problema de los métodos se discute ahora y seguirá discutiéndose por mucho tiempo, pero hay maestros que coinciden en ciertos puntos.

Elaborar un sistema en el que se prescindiera totalmente de la gramática, fundado en que el niño aprende así su lengua materna, me parece un error fundamental, porque ni pasada la

infancia se conservan las especiales aptitudes de los primeros años de la vida ni una escuela puede reproducir las condiciones en que el infante vive y va asimilándose poco a poco el idioma nativo. El adulto que para aprender la lengua extranjera se traslada a un país donde se habla, hace más rápidos progresos si tiene conocimientos previos de gramática o se dedica simultáneamente a su estudio. La fatigosa repetición de frases para aprenderlas de memoria proporciona quizá el vocabulario de lo que llamamos "everyday conversation," pero, además de ser muy limitado en sus posibilidades de expresión, no es aprender satisfactoriamente una lengua ni menos estudiarla al nivel de la enseñanza secundaria y superior. La experiencia ha demostrado, no hay duda, que tampoco llega a hablarse una lengua extranjera almacenando en la memoria numerosas y detalladas reglas gramaticales. No. La gramática ha de estudiarse, reducida a sus elementos fundamentales, de una manera funcional, pragmática, de modo que a las reglas sigan numerosos ejemplos y extensos ejercicios de aplicación, para que el alumno asimile mentalmente las normas, incorporándolas a su manera de expresarse, hasta convertirlas en hábito.

La labor de aprender bien una lengua extranjera requiere—a no estar dotado el alumno de excepcionales aptitudes—un trabajo considerable y un esfuerzo cuantioso, que puede realizarse de dos modos: o cíclicamente, adquiriendo en etapas sucesivas conocimientos cada vez más difíciles y elevados, o intensivamente, procurando desde el principio y en un solo recorrido del camino asimilarse funcionalmente toda la estructura gramatical que corresponde a los diversos elementos del idioma. ¿Cuál de los dos sistemas es preferible?. Me decía en cierta ocasión un notable políglota que las lenguas hay que estudiarlas intensivamente, en poco tiempo, porque si el aprendizaje se diluye en varios años resulta que se olvida lo antiguo a la vez que se aprende lo nuevo, y así del mismo modo que no sube el nivel del agua en un estanque cuando tiene un orificio de entrada y otro igual de salida, tampoco sube apreciablemente el nivel de los conocimientos. No suscribo yo este rotundo parecer, y creo que la elección entre el sistema cíclico y el intensivo depende en cada caso de las condiciones de la enseñanza, de las aptitudes y preparación del alumno y de otras circunstancias dignas de tenerse en cuenta; pero sí aseguro que para dominar una lengua extranjera es preciso hacer, de un modo o de otro, el considerable esfuerzo requerido y sin el cual no pueden obtenerse resultados satisfactorios.

*Intensive Spanish* es un libro destinado a proporcionar al alumno, de una vez, la totalidad de los conocimientos precisos para dominar cumplidamente la lengua española, partiendo de la idea de que el camino gramatical es el mejor y de que hay que recorrerlo trabajando con intensidad. En 411 páginas de contenido docente se exponen los principios y normas gramaticales—reducidos a los elementos necesarios para escribir y hablar correctamente el español—con claras y precisas explicaciones, dedicando la mayor parte del texto a los ejemplos y a los ejercicios. En la cantidad y la calidad de la labor que interpretando los ejemplos y efectuando los ejercicios ha de realizar el alumno consiste principalmente la índole intensiva del libro. El profesor Bolinger lo ha escrito concienzudamente, poniendo a contribución sus sólidos conocimientos de lingüista y su extensa experiencia en la enseñanza.

Distínguese *Intensive Spanish* por lo que podríamos llamar su sistematización pedagógica, que permite al alumno seguir la línea de la exposición como un desarrollo natural de los conocimientos anteriores y de los nuevos principios, sobre la base del propio "background" de la nativa lengua inglesa. Y se tratan, en mi opinión, con sumo acierto determinados puntos "neurálgicos" que el español tiene para los estudiantes norteamericanos, entre ellos los matices diferenciales en el empleo de los verbos *ser* y *estar* y el uso de las formas del subjuntivo. Finalmente, debo decir que la colección de discos gramofónicos grabados como expresión fonética y práctica del método serán de gran utilidad no sólo para el autodidacto, sino para servirse de ellos en las clases y en el trabajo personal de los alumnos deseosos de aprovechar bien las lecciones recibidas en las aulas.

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